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IN SECTION TWO

RED RUM'S CHARACTER IN THE HATE  
The most famous racehorse in Britain has been destroyed after being found distressed in his box.

# Government lawyer sells off Fred West biography

The Official Solicitor has commissioned a "definitive" biography of Fred West and has provided the author with thousands of pages of police interviews as well as West's handwritten account of his life.

The author who has been awarded what will undoubtedly prove a literary goldmine is a former *Times* journalist, Geoffrey Wansell, who recently completed a biography of the playwright Terence Rattigan.

The extraordinary and controversial deal was brokered by the literary agency, Scott Ferris Associates on behalf of Peter Harris, the Official Solicitor, after a series of highly confidential discussions.

Mr Harris has promised Mr Wansell exclusive access to West's autobiography, said to be entitled *I Only Ever Loved An Angel*, and 13 volumes of transcripts of police interviews with the Gloucester builder. The 100-page memoir is believed to have been unfinished when West, who was charged with the murders of 12 women and girls, hanged himself in Winslow Green prison, Birmingham, on New Year's Day.

The book - which seems certain to be one of the best-selling biographies in recent years - will be published by Hodder Headline, "some time next year" after it bid a six-figure sum. The account will earn West's children thousands of pounds in advance payments from Headline, which will be paid as soon as contracts are signed in the next few days.

The Official Solicitor was made administrator of West's estate - including 25 Cromwell Street, the autobiography and the police interviews - because West died intestate with no adult relatives who could become executors. Mr Harris operates on behalf of anyone who dies without a will or relatives who are able to act as executors.

## EXCLUSIVE MARIANNE MACDONALD

Under normal intestacy laws, his widow, Rosemary, would be entitled to half the proceeds of his estate. But Mrs West, who is standing trial in Winchester for the murders of 10 women and girls, is understood to have waived her right to these.

Mr Wansell will also be paid a large advance when the contracts are sealed and he and the West children will divide future royalty payments between them after the advance has been

the younger ones - that is why the Official Solicitor has decided to make available what is in effect copyright material," Mr Brooke said yesterday. "He is safeguarding the interests of the children."

But John Linneker, of Taylor Jonson Garrett, the solicitors' firm which acts for the Official Solicitor, said he was unaware of any deal concerning the book which excluded the adult children from the proceeds.

Mr Brooke revealed yesterday that the biography would "dwell on a great deal of detail" which emerged from the police interrogations.

Both the police statements and West's handwritten memoir contained information which would be unknown to the public, particularly with regard to West's activities in Scotland as a young man, he added.

As the effects of the trusted Mr Harris is under a duty to West's children to "maximise" the profits from their father's estate. Its prime asset is the so-called West archive including the transcripts of police interviews and the autobiography.

But others are likely to disagree with the Official Solicitor's decision that the West children's financial interest is best served by commissioning an official biography. They argue that a no-holds-barred account of West's life, however grisly, must increase the already macabre level of interest in his life and affect the future happiness of the children.

Mr Wansell, who lives in Wiltshire, said yesterday that he hoped to finish his biography about nine months after the end of Rosemary West's trial, which he has been attending.

He added: "I think the chance of trying to write a book about West himself is fascinating and I am approaching it with enormous trepidation." He refused to disclose his advance for

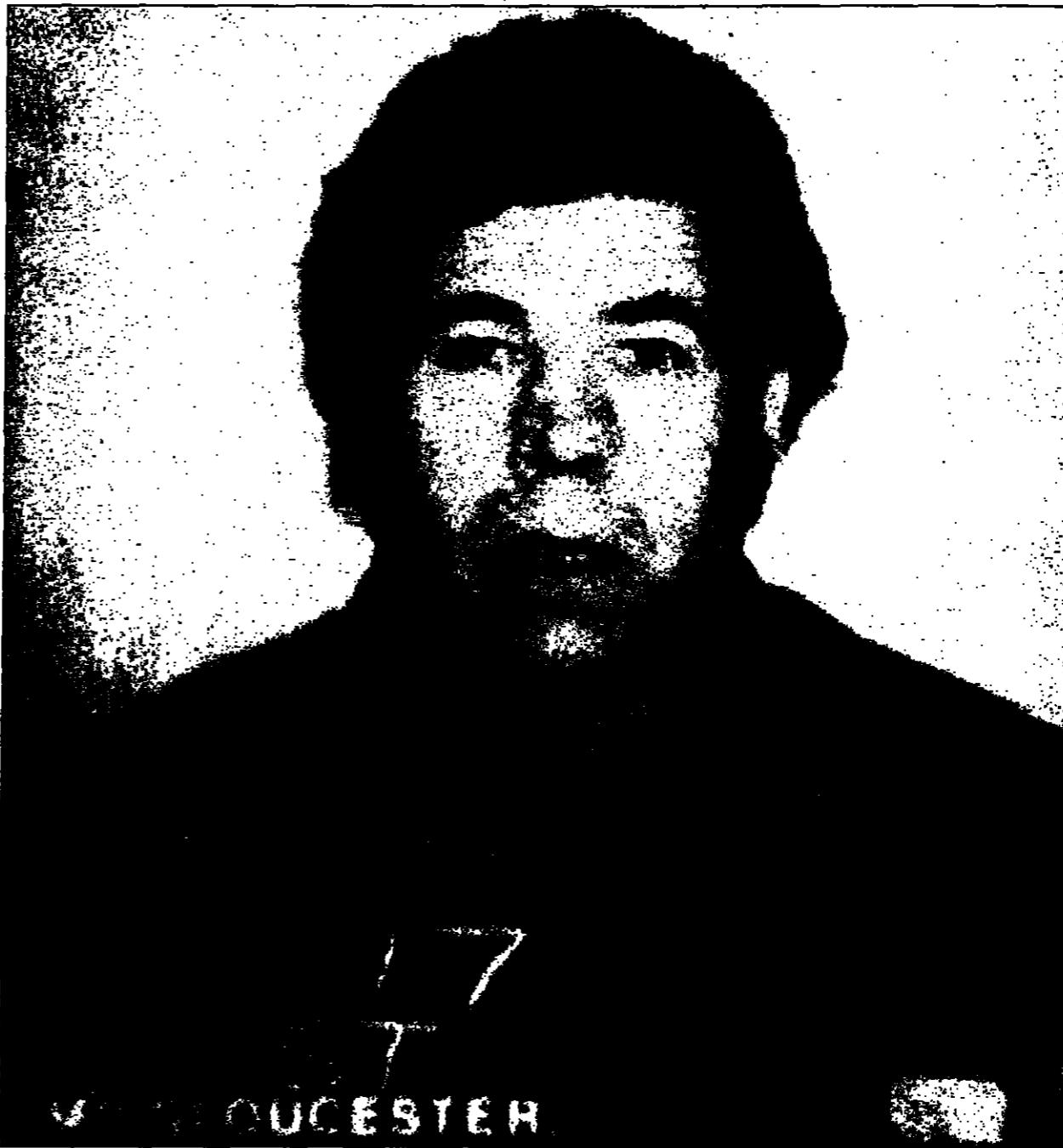
earned back in sales.

Alan Brooke, the non-fiction publisher, said he had been offered seven or eight biographies of West but had chosen to bid for Mr Wansell's because "it was a completely definitive account".

He said he had been given to understand that earnings from the book would only go to West's five children who are under 18 and that his three adult children - who have all sold their stories to newspapers - would not profit from it.

"The proceeds from the book will be going to, as one might say, West's surviving children -

With thanks to the author, page 20



By his own hand: Fred West committed suicide after writing 100 pages of his autobiography

Red Rum  
passes  
final  
post

GREG WOOD

Red Rum, the most famous racehorse in Britain, was humanely destroyed yesterday morning after being found distressed in his box. Appropriately, the only horse to win the Grand National three times was later buried in the shadow of the winning post at Aintree racecourse.

Red Rum was 30, an exceptional age for a horse. His racing career began in the mid-1960s, and included a success in a Flat race in the hands of Lester Piggott. But it was when he passed into the care of Ginger McCain, a Southport car-salesman, that his progress towards stardom began.

McCain exercised Red Rum on the beach behind his showroom. In 1973 he won the National for the first time, beating Crisp in one of the most dramatic finishes seen at Aintree. He won again in 1974, finished second in 1975 and 1976, and completed his hat-trick the following year.

In Red Rum's time, the National course was more demanding than it is today. The public recognised his achievement, and Red Rum's popularity endured long after his racing days were over. He was in constant demand to open supermarkets and betting shops. "He's always been brilliant with people," said Phil Harrison, his stable-lad in recent years. "As far as I know, he's never bitten or kicked anyone."

McCain said yesterday: "He was a tremendous old competitor, but much more than that. He'd switched on the Blackpool lights and was chosen-in-honour at the Highland Games. He was a very remarkable horse, seriously magical." A memorial will be erected over Red Rum's grave in time for the next Grand National.

National treasure, page 28

## Sacked prisons chief to sue Howard

HEATHER MILLS  
AND DONALD MACINTYRE

Embattled Michael Howard vowed to clear his name last night in the face of a High Court writ from Derek Lewis, the sacked director of the Prison Service, implicitly accusing the Home Secretary of having misled Parliament.

Mr Howard was last night said by aides to be "relishing" the prospect of meeting his critics head on in today's Commons debate, amid signs that he still has strong support among Tory MPs. As part of a concerted effort by Government strategists to deflect the attacks on Mr Howard, Conservative Central Office issued a series of rebuttals of allegations made by the Labour leader Tony Blair and his Home Affairs spokesman Jack Straw.

But Mr Lewis' writ for unlawful dismissal presents the gravest threat to date to the

Home Secretary's career. It lies in the face of Mr Howard's assertion to the Commons that he played no part in the removal of John Marriott, the Parkhurst prison governor, after the escape of three top-security

prisoners. Not only has Mr Howard always denied interfering in operational matters, the writ claims that to do so breaches the terms under which the Prison Service Agency was set up.

Geoffrey Keays, one of the four non-executive members of the Prisons Board, resigned in protest at Mr Lewis' treatment of John Marriott, the Parkhurst prison governor, after the escape of three top-security

"It is the Home Secretary's cowardly, dishonourable and dissembling response to the Parkhurst escape which may now prove fatal to him" - Leading article, page 20

prisoners. And it contains a damning catalogue of 12 alleged incidents of ministerial interference in Prison Service operations and business. They include delaying security improvements and changing them, interfering in staff relations and in prison discipline - and a requirement that Mr Lewis meet Mr Howard and others at the Home Office an average of once a day to discuss opera-

Mr Lewis is seeking special damages for loss of his £125,000 a year salary under a revised contract which was due to end in September 1996. His comparative stance has clearly ended any lucrative severance package that he might have received had he gone quietly.

Within hours of Mr Lewis' bombshell, the increasingly isolated Home Secretary was dealt another embarrassing blow.

Although Mr Lewis' actions seriously undermine Mr Howard's claim that he bears no responsibility for the Parkhurst debacle and the crisis in the prison service, last night he said his only concern was to get at the truth. "For me it is matter of getting the record straight, clearing the air, and creating the conditions for the operational independence that the Prison Service needs," he told the *Independent*.

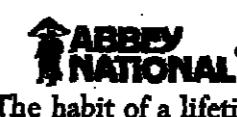
But his court action has the potential for far greater damage. Under the rules of disclosure, Mr Lewis could obtain access to the thousands of documents considered by the Learmonth Inquiry - many of which are believed to point to ministerial

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Paris to join nuclear ban  
France, along with Britain and the United States, is to announce that it intends joining the South Pacific nuclear-free zone, committing itself to closing its nuclear testing facilities in Mururoa, though not before it has completed its current cycle of experiments there. Page 15

Leeson's bosses questioned  
Singapore investigators moved swiftly yesterday to interview James Bax and Simon Jones, the senior Barings' executives who supervised disgraced trader Nick Leeson. Their action followed allegations of a cover-up of Leeson's share dealing losses which brought down Barings Bank. Page 22

Ohio offers peace  
Wright-Patterson air force base in Ohio, the planned site of the Bosnian peace talks, bristles with the instruments of air power which did as much as anything to bring the three reluctant participants to the bargaining table. Page 14

Jobless fall  
Unemployment in September showed the largest monthly fall so far this year. The total fell to 2,265,000. Page 23

Graf stuffer's second defeat  
Steffi Graf, under pressure from a tax-fraud investigation and a chronic back injury, suffered only her second defeat of the year yesterday when she was knocked out of the Brighton International tournament by Mariana de Swart. Page 32

IN BRIEF  
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## news

# Rosemary West trial: Witness tells of 'excruciating pain' during sexual assault by father and stepmother

# Daughter 'was abused from age of 8'

WILL BENNETT

Anne Marie Davis told a hushed Winchester Crown Court yesterday how her father, Frederick West, and her stepmother, Rosemary West, repeatedly sexually abused her from the age of eight onwards.

Speaking quietly and often crying, she described how on one occasion she had been strapped to a frame and raped by Mr West and how later she was assaulted by the couple after a friendly night out.

She was told they were helping her future sex life, that she was lucky to have such caring parents and that this type of behaviour went on in all families.

Mrs West, 41, denies murdering 10 girls and young women whose remains were found at 25 Cromwell Street.

Gloucester, and at the couple's previous home in the city. Mr West, who was charged with 12 murders, was found dead in his prison cell on New Year's Day.

Mrs Davis, 31, told the court that she was the daughter of Mr West and his first wife, Rena, but she was brought up by Rosemary West.

She said that when she was about eight her father and stepmother took her down into the cellar at 25 Cromwell Street where Mrs West undressed her.

Mrs Davis said: "I was crying, just asking what is going on? What is happening? And I was told I should be very grateful and I was very lucky that I had such caring parents and they were going to help me make sure that when I got married I would be able to satisfy my

husband. I was struggling... so much that I had my hands bound and I was gagged."

"I remember the excruciating pain. I just wanted the hurt to go away. I also felt I should not be so ungrateful because they were doing this to help me."

Brian Leveson QC, for the prosecution, asked what Mrs West's reaction had been. She replied: "She was laughing and snirking and joining in and just saying to me it was for my own good and to stop being silly."

Mrs Davis said: "My father scratched her chest and warned her not to tell anybody what had happened. She told the jury of eight men and four women that later her father brought home a U-shaped metal frame he had made. In the cellar she said she was stripped and strapped to the frame and when

she was present on a number of occasions when Mr West had sex with her.

She was 13. Mrs Davis said she went out to a pub with her stepmother and they had a sociable evening. Mrs West made her drink barley wine and she was drunk when they left.

Mrs Davis said: "Rosemary said we would be walking home. I started walking. All of a sudden my dad drove up and I was pushed in to the back of the van."

"My father came into the back. He was hitting me and Rosemary was being sarcastic and calling me names and kept hitting me and my father had sexual intercourse with me. She was just laughing. I didn't understand what was happening."

Mrs Davis said that when one of her teachers noticed that she was bruised on one occasion

lady from the welfare" came round to 25 Cromwell Street. After she left Mr West gave her "the biggest hiding" of her life.

She said that Charmaine West, Mr West's first wife's daughter by another man, had antagonised Rosemary West and had refused to cry when she was beaten as she regarded this as a sign of weakness.

Mrs Davis added that when Mrs West told her that Charmaine had gone to live with her mother in Scotland Mr West was in prison at the time. The prosecution alleges that a child's remains found at the West's previous home at 25 Midland Road, Gloucester, are those of Charmaine.

She also said that Mr West informed Mrs West about the fact that Shirley Robinson, a lodger at number 23, was ex-

pecting his baby. The remains of Shirley and an unborn child were found at the house.

Mrs Davis continued: "My stepmother was very upset and it was understandable my father was humiliating her. After that it became very tense in the household. There were a lot of rows between my stepmother and my father."

"I came home from school one day very close to when Shirley's baby was due and I was told that Shirley had gone to Germany." She said that she never saw Shirley again.

Asked about the relationship between her father and stepmother, Mrs Davis said: "I believe they always told each other what they were doing. They had total trust."

Today the jury will visit 25 Cromwell Street.

Anne Marie Davis in court. An artist's impression

she started screaming she was gagged. Her father had sex with her and Mrs West then sexually abused her.

She said that her stepmother

## Secrecy and stealth of the West deal

Marianne Macdonald explains the background to the selling of a story

It was the literary deal of the decade, and it was brokered with the stealth and secrecy of a military operation.

It was also the deal which jerked Peter Harris, the Official Solicitor, out of the slow-moving legal world and plunged him into the publishing shark-pit which accompanies the sale of a best seller.

For what he had to offer was exclusive access to the story of Fred West's life - a life story which he had spent months writing while confined in Birmingham's Winson Green prison awaiting trial on 12 charges of murdering women and young girls, including his first wife and his daughter.

If that were not enough, Mr Harris also had in his possession the mountain of police transcripts of interviews with West - 13 volumes in all - which revealed unknown details about the man.

The material formed part of West's estate, and had come under the administration of Mr Harris after West died intestate, having hanged himself in prison last New Year's Day.

In normal circumstances his widow, Rosemary, would have been appointed executor - but she had also been charged with serial murder and had waived any rights to the estate. Nor could the couple's adult children be given control, because they had sold their stories to national newspapers and so had a conflict of interest when it came to distributing the assets.

Mr Harris was left with the unpleasant task of "maximising the profit" from West's paper goldmine for the benefit of all his eight surviving children.

His solution was to instruct the literary agency Scott Ferris Associates in the spring to secretly sound out possible biographers and suggest appropriate candidates.

By August the agency's two leading figures, Scott Ferris and Gloria Ferris, had come up with a shortlist of about four.

The potential biographers were asked to submit an outline of how they would approach the biography. They were then interviewed by Mr Harris and solicitors from Taylor Joynson Garrett. This secretive selection process resulted in the selection of Wansell, who was deemed most likely to produce a scholarly and unsensational account.

They had their biographer - not the best known, perhaps, but with a number of previous biographies on his CV. The next step was to find a publisher.

Not every publishing firm would be interested. And not every firm would be able to pay a top price. But a handful were approached, among them Hodder Headline.

"I saw an outline of what the book was going to contain which is confidential, but also more importantly the details of the resources that would be going into the book - including the autobiography and interviews with various people," says Alan Brooke, Headline's non-fiction publishing director.

Holt's Field, on the Gower peninsula near Swansea, has been the subject of a series of

legal wrangles for the past six years. The hamlet of 27 chalets surrounded by deep woodland has been compared to "Arcadia", the legendary Greek idyll, by one government inspector, and designated a conservation area for representing "a unique part of the nation's built legacy".

As a result Hodder Headline put the largest bid on the table - which may not be much under £1m - and were awarded the deal. "The remuneration was a large part of it," concedes John Linneker, the solicitor who attended the author selection meetings.

The biography is expected to be on the bookshelves in the second half of next year.

Leading article, page 20

MARY FAGAN

Industrial Correspondent

Ofcom, the telecommunications

watchdog, has shelved proposals for a radical overhaul of the nation's telephone numbers, including new regional codes beginning '02'.

The proposals sparked sharp criticism from the industry and consumer groups when they

were announced in June, only two months after the Phoneday change which gave numbers an extra '1'.

Don Cruickshank, director-general of Ofcom, said: "This is not a climbdown. It is just that nobody liked any of the options we could think of."

He said that consultations since June proved that there is insufficient understanding of

consumers needs and those of the industry and that more work needs to be done.

Mr Cruickshank also said that of six cities which could run out of numbers in five years - Cardiff, Belfast, London, Portsmouth, Reading and Southampton - only Reading requires urgent action.

Reading is now to be given a new numbering system with an

"0118" code replacing the existing "01734" in order to increase available numbers.

The city has three times the average national demand for numbers, partly because it attracts large businesses wanting thousands of direct dial lines for employees. Mr Cruickshank said that, in retrospect, it should have been given the new code at the time of Phoneday when sever-

al other cities were given new codes.

BT, which spent £100m on the

Phoneday change in April, had

attacked the June proposals as confusing for customers. Yes-

terday it said it supported Of-

com's decision to consult more

widely before making sweeping

change. The watchdog now

hopes to set out options for the

future by October next year.

## IN BRIEF

### Guy's campaigners lose legal battle

Campaigners yesterday lost their High Court attempt to save Guy's hospital south London from radical changes they believe will be detrimental to the local community.

They claimed they had been "blatantly denied" the right to proper consultations before a decision to transfer patient and emergency services at Guy's to St Thomas' hospital.

But Mr Justice Laws rejected the application by Southwark Community Health Council, the Save Guy's Campaign and Simon Hughes, the local Liberal Democrat MP, to be allowed to seek a judicial review. He said they had delayed too long in launching their challenge.

### Parents win claim

A man cleared of murdering a Scottish teenager has been ordered to pay £50,000 damages to her family. The ruling from the Court of Session came after Joe and Kate Duffy - whose daughter Amanda, 19, was found dead in May 1992 - raised a civil action against Francis Auld, 22, who was freed by the High Court in Glasgow after the criminal case against him was found not proven.

### £15m heroin haul

Two Belgians were arrested and police seized 50 kilograms of heroin with a street value of up to £15m - one of the largest hauls uncovered in Britain this year - after stopping a van in Tottenham, north London.

### Policeman shot

A police firearms officer underwent surgery at Bristol Royal Infirmary to remove a bullet from his right leg after being accidentally shot in the thigh by a colleague.

### Murder acquittal

One of two Asian men accused of murdering Richard Everitt, 15, in a street attack was freed at the Old Bailey. Mrs Justice Steel directed the jury to find Abdul Hai, 20, not guilty of murder and four other charges "as a matter of law".

### Baby death inquiry

A consultant anaesthetist has been suspended and an investigation launched after the death of a seven-week-old girl following after a routine operation at a hospital in Dudley, West Midlands.

### 'Log basket' record

A huge 14th-century bowl which had been used as a makeshift log basket fetched £128,000 when sold at Christie's in London - a record for a Mamluk piece of Egyptian-Syrian metalware from between the 13th and 16th centuries.

### THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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## Editor switches to daily beat at the 'Telegraph'

**PETER VICTOR**

After nearly three weeks of waiting, Charles Moore was finally named editor of the *Daily Telegraph* last night. Dominic Lawson, currently in charge of the *Spectator* magazine, will replace Mr Moore as editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*.

Mr Moore, 38, takes over at the daily paper following the resignation of Max Hastings, who has now moved on to take charge of the *London Evening Standard*.

Mr Moore, who has edited the *Sunday* title since 1992, was deputy editor of *The Daily Telegraph* for two years and

also spent six years at the helm of *The Spectator*. In a statement, the *Telegraph* group said: "He was conspicuously successful in all these positions and we are confident that he is uniquely qualified to lead *The Daily Telegraph* to even greater heights of market leadership than it already enjoys."

But most observers believe the time it has taken for the newspaper's board to arrive at Mr Moore has cast a shadow over his appointment. One source confirmed that he was the third choice behind Andrew Neil, former editor of *The Sunday Times*, and Paul Dacre, editor of the *Daily Mail*.

Mr Neil was believed to have been offered the editor's chair by Conrad Black, chairman of the *Telegraph*, shortly after Mr Hastings suddenly stepped down. Agreement could not be reached, however, and Mr Black's attention then turned to Mr Moore, who, since taking over the *Mail* in 1992, has demonstrated the staunchly right-wing credentials which the Canadian businessman so admires.

Mr Moore, who is also considered a virulent right-winger, said he was "honoured" to have been offered the job, which he regarded as the best in British newspapers.

## Linford by Linford

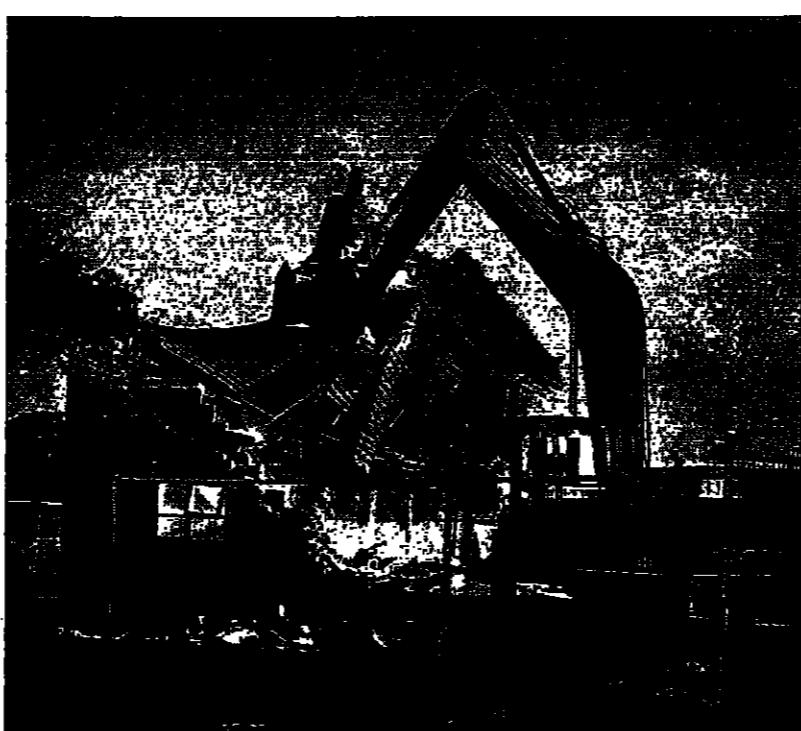
I never knew the difference between being black or white until I went to school. Children can be so cruel. A group of them was messing around, chasing one another, when I decided to join in. I caught this girl and she said I couldn't play. When I asked why not she replied "My Mummy said I shouldn't play with blackies." I thought "I'm black!" I was only about eight years old but to this day I can still hear her voice and remember exactly what she said.

Read his autobiography, serialised exclusively in the **Independent**, from this Saturday



4 news

# House that William built is reduced to a pile of rubble



Handful of dust: A bulldozer ordered in by Charnwood Borough Council begins the task of demolishing the house (left and centre) owned by William Pickavant and his son, Lester (right)

Photograph: Paul Tonge/Raymonds

The final act in the drama had been a long time coming. For four years the Pickavants had used every legal measure at their disposal to prevent the local authority demolishing their cottage because they lacked planning permission.

But when the end came, it did so swiftly. Father and son were removed at dawn from the home - just outside Wymeswold, Leicestershire, and within three hours it was reduced to a pile of rubble.

Both men, William, 67, and Lester, 34, were arrested for their vain efforts to prevent the council's contractors moving to do the job that they had been ordered to do themselves three years previously.

Last night Lester Pickavant's girlfriend, Tricia Bloor, who lived at the house with him, accused Charnwood Borough Council of making them homeless, despite making applications earlier this year for permission to carry out the work.

But the authority stoutly defended its decision, saying that from the outset the Pickavants had been advised that they required planning permission, but carried on regardless without it.

Building work at Holly Lodge Farm was monitored from the time the bungalow was erected on the site of a previous cottage. Officials at the local authority said in a statement

that they were first led to believe the building was to be a barn. The Pickavants only conceded later that it would be a house, while ignoring advice that they used planning permission.

In 1992 the authority served an enforcement notice, demanding that William Pickavant, a retired soldier, demolish the house, an order against which he appealed.

But his appeal was rejected at a subsequent public inquiry and he was convicted this year in the crown court of failing to comply with the enforcement notice. The Recorder in the case urged Mr Pickavant to "come to his senses".

Still the Pickavants did not comply with the order and the council said in September that it planned to do the job itself "in

fairness to all those who have been refused planning permission and have abided by the law".

Yesterday morning at 6.15am, officials from the council, accompanied by police, arrived to be met at the front gate by the Pickavants and Miss Bloor.

Police said they were concerned about the possibility of

violence. In another planning row, Albert Dryden shot dead Harry Collinson, a planning officer, in front of television cameras.

Mr Collinson had arrived to supervise the demolition of his cottage, also built without permission.

William Pickavant was released without charge after questioning yesterday. However, his son was still being held last night, pending a decision on whether he should be

charged with a breach of the peace.

But Miss Bloor was angry at the outcome of the dispute.

"I cannot believe the world

exists with such people. I would

never have thought any of this

possible. It was a beautiful cottage, lined with oak beams. It was a typical rural home.

"I honestly thought someone would find a compromise to the problem. Where can we go now? Am I just going to have to buy a tent?"

## Mackay hits back over divorce Bill

STEPHEN WARD  
Legal Affairs Correspondent

Lord Mackay, the Lord Chancellor, yesterday defended his proposed Divorce Reform Bill against those who have said it would weaken the institution of marriage.

Some critics on the right of the Conservative Party are unhappy about plans to abolish the principle under which if one partner is said to be at fault, and about reducing the time for the quickest divorces from two to one.

The Bill is likely to be put to the Commons on a free vote as a matter of conscience, early in the next session of Parliament, but would still be implemented after a lengthy period of pilot schemes and training of new mediators.

In a speech to a Catholic mediation service, Marriage Care, the Lord Chancellor, a devout Christian, said the law could never save marriages that had

genuinely and irretrievably broken down. "The law, no matter how cleverly and carefully drafted, cannot force couples to live together. It cannot make people love and cherish each other, nor make them help, understand, respect and be tolerant of each other while they are husband and wife.

"Even if divorce were to be outlawed altogether, marriages would still break down and some partners would simply walk away."

"How much worse to leave the future arrangements for finance, property and especially for children unresolved, and for the new relationships into which those who walk away would be apt to enter."

"I am only too aware of the research in this area that indicates the damage to children caused by family conflict."

He told his audience, which included Catholic MPs from both parties: "The new system will not involve allegations of

fault, which can cause the couple to come into conflict at the outset. The applicant [for divorce] will be required to file a neutral statement that they believe their marriage has broken down."

He said the intention was that more marriages could be saved by the process, which encourages mediation, rather than encouraging both sides to appoint solicitors who would often turn the process into a confrontation.

"I do not believe a marriage is necessarily irretrievable, just because one of the parties has asked for divorce."

"In marriages where communication has been difficult between the couple, such a step may be a means of getting the marriage on the agenda, to make the other partner take the problems seriously."

"This is one of the main reasons underlying my wish to change the current divorce system, in particular, how the divorce starts."

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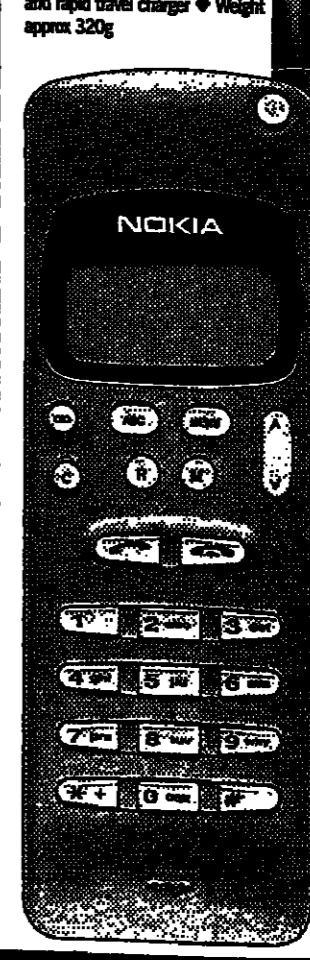
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# Dover rallies against French invasion threat

Government sell-off plans could see the tricolour flying over Kent's white cliffs. James Cusick reports

It is a moment for which the people of Calais have waited more than 400 years, since their port was last under English rule.

Now the port of Dover faces being bought up by Calais, its Channel counterpart, creating a conflict which may well become known as Le Stink.

That a corner of England might turn French overnight is due to the Government's imminent privatisation plans, which could mean the port of Dover will be put on the open market. Growing expectation that Calais is the most likely buyer has united the Kent town against the sell-off.

Calais was last under English rule between 1347 and 1558, and its loss caused Mary Tudor to pledge that the word Calais would be found carved upon her heart.

Yesterday, passions were running high again. Before the Sun newspaper had time to rewrite its famous "Hop off, you Frogs" headline, two Labour

MPs were gathering petition signatures in the town centre and handing out leaflets.

"Napoleonic (sic) couldn't capture it," pronounced a Labour leaflet. If any opposition had been around, they could have said in their own leaflet: "Labour can't spell Napoleon."

However, there is little opposition to those who want Dover to retain the trust status it has enjoyed since 1606.

"Hitler couldn't destroy it," said another Labour leaflet. Before there was time to mention King John in Dover kneeling before Pandul to surrender England to Pope Innocent III, a Labour messenger arrived with startling news: "Dame Vera's on board, isn't that wonderful!"

Dame Vera Lynn, whose solo battle charge had John Major running scared over his D-Day party plans, may now be the crucial combatant in the dark days of the privatisation battle.

Dover's mayor and the speaker of the ancient Cinque Ports (of which Dover is one) has already resorted to heavy artillery in his opening volleys. The Queen Mother, in her capacity as Warden of the Cinque Ports, has been contacted. "You will know," wrote George Hood, the mayor, in his letter to Clarence

House, "of the long and illustrious history of the port of Dover both in defence of the realm and in providing passage to the continent".

He said yesterday: "We are hoping for a positive response from Her Majesty because as you know she is the Lord Warden and Admiral of the Cinque Ports and Constable of Dover Castle."

It was a busy day for Mr Hood. After fielding inquiries from the local press, he found himself in demand from BBC South East and ITN, and then the French media in the prestigious form of *Le Monde*.

Did he comment on Le Stink? "No. As a politician all I can say is that I have known the mayor of Calais, Monsieur Jean Barre for 20 years. And I can understand why they would want to buy Dover to safeguard their own business."

Mr Hood said Calais depended on tourism for 70 per cent of its income. "They live off the strength of their port."

Back in the high street, the Labour team was working hard. Mark Watts, MEP for Kent East, said Labour was united in its opposition to the proposal. Rotterdam, Antwerp and Zeebrugge all remained committed to public ownership, he said. It was therefore unthinkable that Dover should be privatised.

The Labour MPs Glenda Jackson and Joan Walley, both transport spokeswomen, said they would fight the Government attempt to "cherry-pick Dover in a short-term exercise designed to provide money for the Treasury and tax cuts". Ms Walley said: "Dover is symbolically England. They are selling off the gateway to this country."

The Port of Dover's Harbour Board said yesterday it wanted the Government to reschedule the privatisation timetable as the effects of the Channel tunnel were yet to be fully resolved. Its chairman, John Molby, has asked the Secretary of State for Transport, Sir George Young, for "two full years of competition [with the tunnel] in order that the port's future can be less obscure than it is now".

Meanwhile in the town's pubs there was much talk of Winston Churchill, little talk of La Manche, and plenty of talk of Le Stink.

## Church finds life at Rainbow's end

JOHN MCKIE

The Rainbow Theatre, one of London's most historic venues, has been sold to a mysterious Brazilian religious organisation for £2.35m.

The Rainbow, previously known as the Astoria, in Finsbury Park, also used to be a cinema before it closed in 1981, but was best known as one of Britain's greatest pop music venues.

It played host to The Beatles, David Bowie, Nat King Cole and The Clash, and was the venue where Rod Stewart kicked footballs into the crowd. The late Frank Zappa was attacked on stage by a deranged fan before he escaped to the Isle of Wight festival in 1970. And it was where 6,000 young fans of the Osmond Brothers went on the rampage in 1973 when they discovered that the

2,500 capacity gig had sold out. The Property group Prior Kirschel Properties, which bought the Rainbow last October, yesterday announced it had exchanged contracts with the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, a Brazilian organisation with bases in 25 countries. The organisation had tried to take over another rock venue, the Brixton Academy, as its British headquarters but it was bought by music promoters. The same promoters had previously been talking with PKP about the acquisition and restoration of the Rainbow.

The Universal Church - which has been rebuked by the Advertising Standards Authority for claiming its pastors could cure headaches, depression and insomnia - has kept a low profile since its interest in Brixton Academy was announced this summer.

### DAILY POEM

#### Beachcombers

By Robert Nye

Flood-tide rising ebb-tide falling  
Drowned the Queen in the bell:  
Her heart lolled on the clapper  
A toll or two, then fell.  
Down where her mind had fallen  
Ringing a high-pitched knell.

Columbus locked in his cabin,  
Drunk on Atlantic dew;  
Dreamt of the crucifixion.  
Riding at anchor, his crew  
Lusted after blue dolphins.  
Whispered: 'The Wandering Jew.'

No angelus no America  
Have we to undiscovers  
Who both have been beachcombers  
Where the last sea has no lover.  
O Sea, run deep below me!  
As you are high above her.

Robert Nye was born in London in 1939. He left school at 16 and lived for 5 years in a remote cottage in Wales, working on two collections of poetry that won him a Gregory Award in 1963. He has been called "the inheritor of a poetic tradition that runs from Donne and Raleigh to Edward Thomas and Robert Graves", with a lyric voice "unlike that of any of his contemporaries". His novel *Reisefuhrer* won the Hawthornden and *Guardian* fiction prizes for 1976, and he has been poetry critic of the *Times* for the last two decades. This poem is taken from *Collected Poems*, published this week by Sinclair-Stevenson at £15.



Under a cloud: Government privatisation plans, and the possibility that the port will be bought up by Calais, have cast a shadow over Dover's future. Photograph: Brian Harris

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## politics

## Shadow cabinet poll may be last

JOHN RENTOUL  
Political Correspondent

The shadow Cabinet elections held last night could be the last before the next general election, as a wide range of Labour MPs backed the idea of scrapping next year's contest if the present parliament continues into 1997.

Significantly, the plan was backed by the left-wing MP for Nest, Peter Hain, who told the *Independent*: "Although I am a strong supporter of electing the shadow Cabinet – and I'll defend that principle to the last – I think there's a strong case, in view of the imminence of the general election, for having a settled team which can concentrate on beating the Tories rather than worrying about being internally re-elected."

A recent poll of Labour MPs found a narrow majority opposed to permanently abolishing shadow Cabinet elections, but Mr Hain's move could signal a shift of opinion next year. It makes it more likely that the team chosen yesterday would form the Cabinet if Tony Blair wins the next election. However, Mr Blair's office said the Labour leader had "no plans" to scrap next year's ballot.

Kate Hoey, Labour MP for Vauxhall and a strong supporter of Mr Blair, yesterday

stepped up her campaign against the "charade" of annual elections. She said: "The Labour Party voted overwhelmingly for Tony Blair. If we trust him, why don't we trust him to make appointments?"

The Labour left insists that the elections are essential to make the leadership accountable. Labour shadow Cabinet elections have taken place since 1923, but opponents claim the elections are a distraction, and reflect regional and factional horse-trading rather than merit.

The shadow Cabinet contest remains vitally important, however, because of standing order E of the rules of the Parliamentary Labour Party. This commits Mr Blair to appointing all the members of his shadow cabinet – which is formally known as the Parliamentary Committee – to the Cabinet in a Labour government.

Mr Blair was asked last month if he would abide by this rule, and said he was happy with it. But it gives him no flexibility if Labour wins the next election. If he has 23 members in his Cabinet, as John Major now has, they are accounted for by himself, his deputy, John Prescott, the 19 elected shadow cabinet members, the shadow Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of



Pensive mood: Robin Cook, who is expected to come near the top of the shadow Cabinet poll. Photograph: Brian Harris

Laird, and Derek Foster. Mr Foster, the outgoing Chief Whip, was promised a Cabinet post as part of the deal in which he gave up the job.

In a rule change agreed as

part of that deal, Mr Blair will appoint a new Chief Whip, probably tomorrow, from

among his new shadow cabinet.

Donald Dewar, currently social

security spokesman, is

favourite.

Once in government, Mr Blair would have the power to make Cabinet appointments. The unanswered question is how long the inherited shadow

cabinet has to stay before he could reshuffle his ministers.

In government, there would be a "liaison committee", including six members elected by backbench Labour MPs, to maintain "an effective two-way channel of communication between the government and

## M15 files will be open to scrutiny

STEPHEN WARD  
Legal Affairs Correspondent

questioned as they move out of areas covered by the catch-all "national security" phrase.

Their higher profile in recent years has been largely cosmetic, confirming matters such as the identity of the director-general, Stella Rimmington, which was already known.

In his report on the latest six cases of the 64 referred to him so far, Mr Reid complains that Whitehall still seems widely unaware of the code of practice which is supposed to mean departments answer reasonable questions from the public freely and openly. It was brought in to head off calls for a Freedom of Information Act. There has been no advertising of the code, which means the public is largely unaware of its new rights.

Mr Reid says the Permanent Secretary at the Home Office has accepted that "the files of the Security Service were open to me if that seemed necessary as part of an investigation even though the administrative actions of the Security Service are not in themselves subject to investigation by me".

Mr Reid says the Permanent Secretary to the Home Secretary is to be a Bill enabling them to take part in fighting organised crime, but it is not clear how their conduct will be

questioned in the report.

"One request for information was badly mishandled because staff failed to recognise the need to deal with it in the context of the code..."

"In other cases, it was only after my intervention that staff approached the request positively. It suggests many staff remain unaware of the significance of information requests."

Of the six latest cases, Mr Reid upheld four complaints, rejected one, and was forced to drop one for security reasons.

## Fox faces fight to lead Tory 1922 Committee

COLIN BROWN  
Chief Political Correspondent

Sir Marcus Fox, the veteran chairman of the Tory 1922 Committee, is to be challenged for his post by Bob Dunn, a leading member of the executive of the backbench group.

Sir Marcus, a doughty Yorkshirer, beat off a challenge last year by Sir Nicholas Bonnor, who later was promoted to the ministerial ranks by John Major.

Mr Dunn's challenge marks the beginning of a wholesale clear-out of many of the leading backbench Conservative MPs from the 18-strong executive of the 1922 Committee and its officers.

The changes are being brought about because many of the MPs are standing down at the next general election. Mr Dunn regards his challenge as a move to ensure continuity, rather than a right-wing coup for the leadership.

A former education minister, Mr Dunn is a leading member of the 92 Group of Tory MPs, a powerful right-wing grouping run by Sir George Gardiner, which commands most of the

key backbench committee posts.

He has the strong support of the 92 Group, and could unseat Sir Marcus from the chairmanship, if the MP for Shipley does not stand down. Sir Marcus is well-liked, but has been accused of being too close to the party leadership.

Among the leading members of the 1922 executive who have announced they are standing down at the next election are Dame Jill Knight, Sir Anthony Grant, Sir Anthony Duran, Sir Peter Hordern, and Sir John Hannan.

It could leave the way open for a younger generation of right-wing Tory MPs to represent the Tory backbench. Many backbenchers complained that the 1922 Committee executive failed to represent their dissatisfaction over policy to the Tory leadership and, instead, was used by the leadership to demand unity behind John Major from the backbench.

Sir Marcus was heavily criticised by those who thought he had gone too far in pledging the support of the 1922 Committee executive for Mr Major in the July leadership election. David Evans and John Townend gave their support to the right-wing challenger, John Redwood.

The outcome of the leadership election has settled Mr Major's position, but the changes likely on the 1922 Committee executive – in effect the shop stewards for the Tory backbench MPs – will guarantee that his leadership is left in no doubt that the backbenchers want a hard-hitting manifesto for the election. They will also urge Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, to lead a more vigorous fight back by senior Cabinet ministers against Tony Blair's appeal.



## CSA cuts £500m from benefit bill

GLENDA COOPER

The Child Support Agency saved nearly £500m in benefits last year and has already "paid for itself", its chief executive claimed yesterday.

Ann Chant told MPs on the Commons social security committee that in 1994-95 the CSA had saved £479m, £19m more than had been forecast.

And more than 60,000 parents had come off income support after they received a maintenance application form, which accounted for £199m. The year previously £138m had been saved.

In all more than £18m had been saved from 1993-94 to August this year. The CSA's running costs since it was started up three years ago had been £500m.

In July the CSA's position was described as "financial chaos" by Labour's social security spokesman, Donald Dewar, after it was revealed that the debt from absent parents had reached £25.5m, money unlikely ever to be collected.

By the end of August this year the total maintenance assessed but not paid had risen to £701.9m. Miss Chant said: "This

is a large sum but the rate of interest has reduced in recent months which reflects the action the agency is taking to reduce the amount of doubtful debt charged."

There were several reasons for so many parents coming off income support, such as reconciliation between the parents, or the parent looking after the child getting an alternative source of income.

Source claimed the numbers coming off income support had shown the CSA to be "an effective social security anti-abuse measure". Miss Chant said that the amount was "not going up inexorably". Initiatives by the Benefits Agency would enable fraud to be identified before the CSA became involved.

She also said the CSA was working closely with the Benefits Agency to investigate allegations of fraud or evasion made by one parent against another. Of 7,610 cases sent to the Benefits Agency in the nine months to last November, 39 per cent "had identified a fraudulent element".

"For good or ill the agency has become a lightning conductor for those wanting to report [alleged fraud]" she said.

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# news

**Strikes on Merseyside:** Green Goddesses stand by as stoppages set to escalate dispute with critical nationwide implications

## Firefighters turn up the heat in battle over jobs

**BARRIE CLEMENT**  
Labour Editor

Fidel Castro stares down on the organisers of the two-month-old campaign of industrial action by firefighters on Merseyside. Senior managers believe that the pictorial presence of the Cuban leader is somehow appropriate.

Union officials venture that an apt picture for the office of the fire chiefs might be that of a certain Italian leader with a fondness for uniforms and a yearning for Abyssinia.

The personal enmity between the two sides, however, belies the seriousness of the dispute and the importance of its outcome to Britain's fire service.

Superficially the argument is more of a chip pan fire than a serious conflagration. The Fire Brigades' Union has registered its determination to resist a

management plan to shed 30 jobs out of 1,336 through natural wastage, and to cut annual leave by three days.

Fire authorities all over the country are faced with budgetary constraints and are watching the Merseyside conflict with considerable interest. One senior management source in the North-West has been told that the Home Office "will not allow" management to lose the dispute.

Next year local government is expecting even tougher cuts with the possibility of compulsory redundancies - an eventually the union has pledged to oppose with a national strike.

On Merseyside the FBU has already staged nine separate stoppages since 17 August; eight strikes of up to nine hours and a day-long walkout which ended at midnight last night.

Yesterday 800 Merseyside

firefighters took their argument to the Fire 95 conference in Harrogate for senior officers where they lobbied Home Office minister, Baroness Blatch.

In route to North Yorkshire yesterday, a fire station officer from Amritsar said that management would be "back for more" if they agreed cuts. "We could lose another 100 jobs next year if they win this dispute. It's the thin end of the wedge."

The strikers are convinced that right is on their side. It is a conviction that seems to have grown since the dispute started. While eight out of 10 firefighters voted for nine-hour strikes, nine in 10 backed an extension of the stoppages to 24 hours. All employees up to and including senior divisional officers have supported the action.

Yesterday 800 Merseyside



Rank and file: Union members applauding a speaker at a rally in Harrogate yesterday

Photograph: Bob Collier

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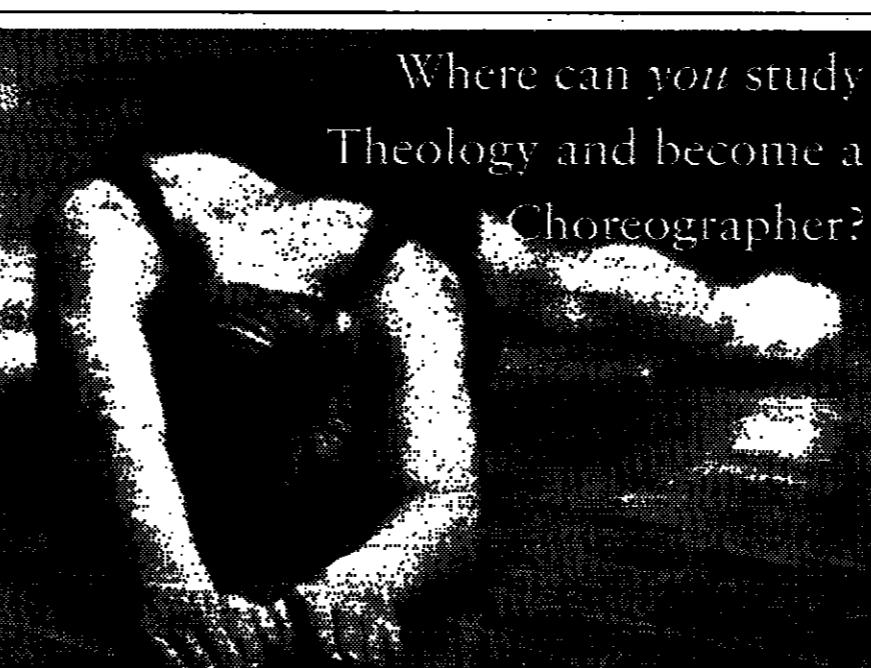
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## Spending on lottery 'lower than expected'

**GLENDY COOPER**

The National Lottery may have gripped the nation's heart, but not its wallet, the latest survey on family spending revealed yesterday.

The average household spent £2.10 - less than 1 per cent of its weekly expenditure - on the lottery in January to March this year. The Central Statistical Office revealed.

Only a tiny percentage spent more than £5 a week on lottery tickets. Caution seemed justified, with average winnings a miserly 80p, less than half the average weekly stake.

And the idea that the poor spend more of their income on lottery tickets proved to be unfounded, according to the report. Spending ranged from 70p in the poorest tenth of the population to £3 in the third richest group. The most well-off spent £2.80.

As a percentage of expenditure the poorest tenth of the population were spending 0.8 per cent on the lottery. This figure did not alter by more than 0.1 per cent until the top 20 per cent of the population. Even then they spend only between 0.5 and 0.7 per cent.

The annual survey, which monitors changes in family spending, showed that in all areas families appear to be keeping a tight rein on spending despite increases in income. While weekly income went up by £17 to £269.30, average weekly spending only went up by £5 to £283.60.

The divide between rich and poor continued to widen. The poorest fifth of households had an average income of £79 a week, compared with the top 20 per cent, who had an average income of £853.70. One-parent families with one child had an average weekly income of £164.60.

Between 1965 and 1994-5, weekly income from wages and salaries declined from 76 per cent to 64 per cent of total income.

The report's editor, John King, said this was due to an

ageing population, which got most of its income from pensions.

Households with the largest disposable income were in the South East, with an average £343.20 - 42 per cent more than the lowest region, Wales (£241.30). Over a fifth of Welsh household income came from social security benefits, compared with a tenth in the South East.

Expenditure varied greatly with different levels of income. While the highest 10 per cent were spending £625.90 per week, the poorest 10 per cent spent over £500 less than this, at £82.10.

Food, at £50.40 per week, remained the highest weekly expense, except in the South-East and South-West where housing overtook this.

In all areas food and housing accounted for a third of all household expenditure. Northern Ireland spent the largest percentage on food (31.3 per cent), with the South-East spending least.

Mr King said that two consumer durables accurately reflected the income of the households - CD players and dishwashers.

Only 15 per cent of the poorest households own a CD player, whereas nearly three-quarters of the richest 10 per cent do.

Similarly, 2 per cent of the poorest households have a dishwasher, compared with 35 per cent of the richest.

Ownership of telephones has jumped dramatically since 1975 when only 52 per cent possessed one. Now 91 per cent of households possess one.

Video-recorders have also become a must-have item, with fewer than a third owning one in 1985, compared with more than three-quarters last year.

Two-thirds of households now have a car or a van and one in five households have two cars.

Half of all households now have a tumble dryer.

*Family Spending: A report on the 1994/95 Family Expenditure Survey, HMSO £54.95.*

### Analysis of average weekly expenditure

By households in the UK 1994-95

Food: £50.40	Northern Ireland: Largest amount of washing machines but lowest proportion of tumble driers.
Housing: £241.30	Scotland: Biggest spenders on spirits and liqueurs, housing only 4th biggest expense at £21 a week.
Leisure Goods & Services: £269.30	Wales: Lowest weekly expenditure of all regions although spending on the 5p above UK average.
Transport: £26.10	South West: Biggest spenders on postage, biggest car/boat ownership.
Household Goods & Services: £242.80	South East excluding London: Highest expenditure on pets, hairdressing and beauty treatment.
Entertainment: £27.70	Greater London: Highest spenders on laundry, the telephone and bottled water.
Clothing and Footwear: £17.10	East Anglia: Lowest spenders on tobacco and alcohol but highest proportion of central heating.
Fuel and Power: £12.90	West Midlands: Expenditure lower than the UK average in all categories.
Alcoholic Drink: £12.28	East Midlands: Spend almost 40 per cent above UK average on motoring and fares.
Personal Goods & Services: £10.80	Yorkshire & Humberside: Biggest purchases of tobacco and over £5 a week spent on beer and cider.
Tobacco: £5.60	The North: Spend most on alcohol and smokes expenditure on hairdressing and beauty treatments.
Miscellaneous: £22.30	North West: Biggest spenders on holiday, lowest proportion of central heating.
Total: £82.10	

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# 'Glaring error' on Brent Spar toxic waste

NICHOLAS SCHOON  
Environment Correspondent

Shell's assessment of the toxic, hazardous contents of the Brent Spar was professional and fairly accurate with one glaring exception, an independent certification organisation reported yesterday.

Oslo-based Det Norske Veritas (DNV) confirmed Green-

peace's own estimate of the oil content of Shell's redundant storage buoy was grossly exaggerated because it was based on "obvious misinterpretations".

The environmental group admitted the error last month.

The oil company had to abandon sea dumping after Greenpeace's protest inspired a European petrol boycott. The 14,500-tonne Spar is now an-

chored in a Norwegian fjord while Shell works on new disposal plans. DNV was paid £200,000 for its investigation.

Shell hired DNV because Greenpeace complained there had been no independent checks before Shell got Government approval to dump the massive structure in deep water.

It found Shell may have seriously underestimated the

quantity of polychlorinated biphenyls, PCBs. These are used in electrical equipment and are among the most persistent, toxic non-pesticide chemicals ever mass-produced for peaceful purposes. Their manufacture is now banned.

While Shell estimated there were fewer than 20 grams on board, DNV said there could be up to eight kilograms - 400

times as much. PCBs may be in small capacitors fitted to each one of 250 light fittings.

DNV said that because it

found out about the capacitors

fairly late in its inquiry, it was

not yet certain whether they did

contain PCBs. But given the age

of the Spar - 20 years - "that would be the usual thing", said DNV vice-president Ole-Arild Hafnor.

Shell said it would be going

back on board next week to

check. DNV pointed out that the

capacitors could easily be re-

moved for safe disposal.

Shell's assessment of the

quantities of oil, radioactivity

and toxic metals in the Spar

were broadly correct, said DNV,

one of the world's leading ship

certification bodies. It slightly

underestimated the levels of

some and overestimated others.

The oil company estimated there was a total of 53 tonnes of oil and oily wax in the Spar. DNV said there was 74 to 103 tonnes. Greenpeace's estimate was 5,500 tonnes, but it later admitted that it took samples from the wrong place.

Both Shell and Greenpeace welcomed the DNV report and accepted its findings.

Shell said that even if it had underestimated the radioactivity and pollutants in the Spar by a factor of ten, dropping it 7,000 feet in the Atlantic seabed would not have posed a significant environmental threat. But John Wybrow, Shell UK's corporate affairs director, confirmed Shell would not propose sea dumping for obsolete installations again.

## Angel spreads her wings in Theatreland

A new impresario may revolutionise the West End stage, writes David Lister



Burning ambition: Donna Knight's vision for the future will give a platform to new writers but may be bad news for musicals. Photograph: Jane Baker

Investors in West End theatre are known as "angels", but rarely do they descend and work a financial miracle as unexpectedly as Donna Knight.

She has rescued one of the year's most acclaimed dramas, which was served with closure notices, is putting it on at a different theatre, plans to buy the venue and hopes to revolutionise the West End.

And until this month no one British theatre had heard of her.

Donna Knight is putting £40,000 of her own money into staging David Greer's play, *Burning Blue*, at the Ambassadors Theatre. The searing drama about anti-gay prejudice in the American navy was forced to close at the larger Lyceum Theatre. Next week she will have talks with the owners of the Ambassadors, which for sale, about buying the theatre, on the market for £50,000.

Mrs Knight, like David Greer, the author of *Burning Blue*, is a New Yorker, who has moved with her family to London. Her husband runs the London Office of the American finance company Bear Stearns, money the two of them have accumulated can now fulfill their dream of championing new writing in the world's best-known centre for theatre.

At 42, Donna Knight is strikingly elegant, her designer clothes out of the latest editions of *Vogue* making a sharp contrast to the dingy offices at the Ambassadors, where she is supervising the new opening of *Burning Blue* tonight. Her father ran a New Jersey printing company and her mother was a Montessori teacher. After a brief career as an actress, she moved into film production, working at MGM, as PA to one of the company's top moguls, the late David Susskind, and ran a theatre group in New York.

As well as producing plays in London she also intends to make films in Britain.

"My passion is championing new writers," she said yesterday. "I want to work with them over here, develop new works and put them on. I want quality as opposed to commercialism. I'm very sad that producers don't always support quality theatre. Why does theatre in London and New York underestimate the intelligence of the public?

"I try to see everything, and love discovering new actors. And the business is so much eas-

ier in London than New York. I can put on five plays here for the cost of one play on Broadway. Also the environment is friendlier here and audiences are more literate."

Mrs Knight is vague about where the money for her ven-

tures comes from, referring only to "private money, my husband and I have accumulated over the years, money we have put aside".

Some of that money will now go towards setting up her own film production company. She

plans to produce a film by an American writer, possibly starring Hollywood's rising star, Sandra Bullock, but with British actors and technicians.

For now, some of the differences between London and New York theatre still surprise

her. One reason *Burning Blue* had to close at the Haymarket, she said, was because of the hot summer and the fact the theatre has no air conditioning. "Every theatre in New York has air conditioning."

If Mrs Knight keeps to her

pledge of championing new writing, London theatre could change radically. Janet Holmes A Court, who owns 11 West End theatres, plans to put on more European drama. The pre-eminence of the musical in the West End may be threatened.

## Police in £1m raid on 'drugs farm'

JASON BENNETTO  
Crime Correspondent

Police raided a secret "drugs farm" hidden in the centre of Manchester yesterday and seized hundreds of extremely powerful cannabis plants known as "skunk weed".

The plants, which detectives claim are worth at least £1m, were being grown in a makeshift greenhouse under plastic sheeting and dozens of fluorescent strip lights inside a derelict warehouse.

Four men were arrested in Manchester after the operation recovered what police believe to be the largest amount of the drug ever found growing in the UK.

The drug, known as "skunk" because of its pungent smell, is much more powerful than normal cannabis and each plant is worth about £1,000.

Also known as "super skunk", most of it is smuggled in from the Netherlands although increasingly it is being grown in Britain. There is a growing demand for the drug because of its potency, a fact identified by dealers who have increased their supplies in recent years.

At about £15 for a sixteenth of an ounce (1.75 grams) - about enough for three very strong cigarettes - it is twice as expensive as normal cannabis.

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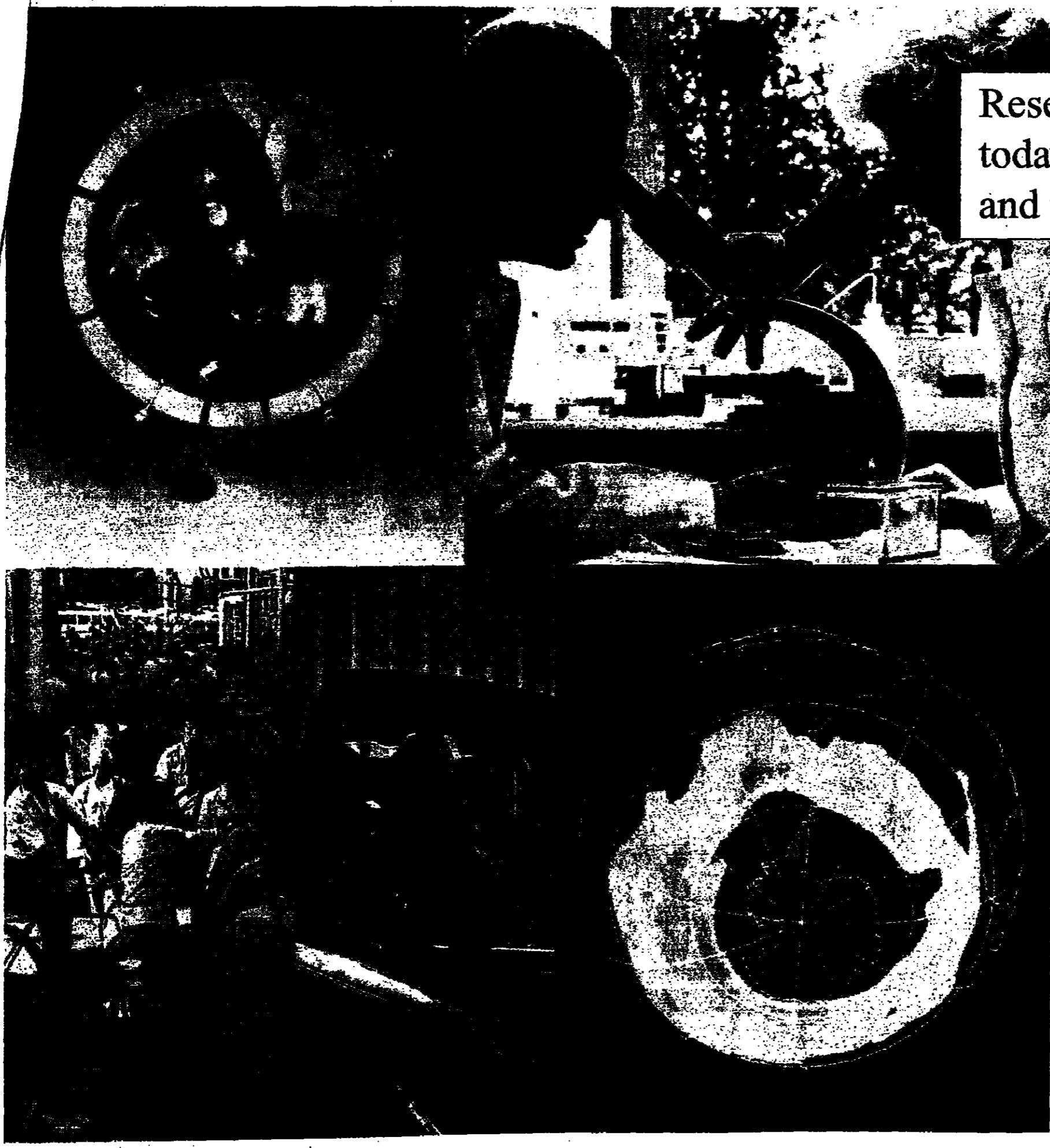
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# international

**Metro blast:** Chirac refuses to drop his plans to meet Algerian military leader as rebels threaten France with a 'holy war'

## Islamists set price for end to bombings

MARY DEJEVSKY  
Paris

The dark shadow of Algeria's civil war fell over France yesterday, as more troops moved on to the streets to reassure a public deeply worried by the prospect of further terrorist attacks. On the day after the eighth bomb in three months, close to the French Foreign Ministry at the Quai d'Orsay underground station, details emerged of a set of demands which established a direct link between French policy towards Algeria and Tuesday's bomb.

An Arabic-language newspaper circulated in France said the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) had set four conditions for stopping the attacks. Thought to have been communicated about a week ago, they included the cancellation of President Jacques Chirac's controversial meeting with the Algerian leader, Lamine Zeroual, at the UN next week.

The other demands were for

an end to French aid to Algeria, the closure of the French embassy in Algiers and the condemnation of next month's presidential election in Algeria, in which Mr Zeroual is a candidate.

The Foreign Ministry declined to comment on the conditions, but did not deny their existence. The GIA, regarded as the most extreme of Algeria's Islamic groups, acknowledged two weeks ago that it was behind the bombings. In a message addressed to French leaders, it described its campaign as a *jihad*, or holy war, against French support for the Algerian regime, and it called on Mr Chirac to convert to Islam.

In the National Assembly on Tuesday, the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, devoted a whole section of his emergency statement on the latest bombing to relations with Algeria.

"France," he said, "has no intention at all of interfering in the slightest in the internal affairs of Algeria. The President

has accepted the principle of meeting his Algerian counterpart in New York, at the latter's request, to express France's point of view. France will not allow Algeria's problems to be transferred to French soil... [It] has every intention of continuing its dialogue with Algeria and no atrocity, however drastically and random, will cause it to be silent."

At yesterday's regular cabinet meeting, Mr Chirac said French policy towards Algeria would not be changed by intimidation and that his meeting in New York should not be seen as "an act of support for anyone".

Despite the appearance of a united front among French leaders, policy towards Algeria is far from clear. The Chirac government inherited an ambiguous policy, which sought to counter Islamic extremism. He appeared to hold the paternalistic, ex-colonial view shared by many older people, that Algeria remains morally responsible of France. As foreign minister, Mr Juppé seemed

more inclined to treat Algeria

as a fully independent country. He also supported the idea of dialogue between Algiers and more moderate Islamic groups. Official policy amounted to continuing economic aid on the grounds that deprivation encouraged fundamentalism. Islamic groups see the aid as

violence - in other words, with the moderate Islamic groups (who also object to the Chirac-Zeroual meeting).

Mr Chirac's decision has also provoked opposition in France. The Socialist leader, Lionel Jospin, a former diplomat, said the meeting was "inopportune" and that Mr Chirac ought to have waited until after the

Algerian election. The sister of Mr Chirac's fellow Gaulist has been defeated.

Now the New York meeting has been so directly connected with the GIA attacks in France, though, Mr Chirac cannot cancel it without appearing to give in to terrorism. For this reason Tuesday's Paris bomb will probably not be the last.

**Standing guard:** a Paris policeman by the gaping hole in the French train that was bombed in Tuesday's morning rush-hour

**Kohl's enemies ready to play anti-EMU card**

IMRE KARACS  
Bonn

Germany's governing Christian Democrats seem to be the envy of the conservative world. Helmut Kohl, in his 13th year as Chancellor, is riding high in the polls, the economy is sound, and the opposition is visibly tearing itself apart.

As CDU delegates filed out of the hall at the end of their three-day party conference yesterday, they had reason to murmur among themselves that they've never had it so good. But, as some of their leaders have warned this week, their success could yet be their undoing.

In the German political landscape, the spectacular feats of the CDU are matched only by their opponents' dismay. The Social Democrats are so devoid of ideas under their charismatic but challenged leader, Rudolf Scharping, that they may be forced to exploit the only issue where Mr Kohl is vulnerable: Europe. At present, the Bonn élite is seemingly united in its commitment to the process of European integration, and Germany, together with France, has traditionally been the locomotive of monetary union. But as the spectre of the yet unnamed Euro-currency looms larger, fear of losing the beloved mark is beginning to grip Germans.

So far these anxieties have merely generated petitions and measured complaints from eminent citizens. But when Germans go to the polls in three years' time, they will be doing so on the eve of monetary union. Opinion polls are already showing that, while an overwhelming majority of Germans are enthusiastic about European integration, only a minority support a common currency.

This is where the Social Democrats come in. By 1998 they will undoubtedly be under a new leader, but still hamstrung by the seemingly irreversible erosion of their support. Organised labour is in retreat, and the Blairst route of escape to the right is blocked by a successful conservative government. On the left, the SPD is being squeezed by the Greens. In the centre, the Christian Democrats could yet be slowed.

**Sack for Holocaust MP**

ADRIAN BRIDGE  
Central Europe Correspondent

under the Nazi regime, saying: "I'll stay out of that one."

The MP's evasiveness put his leader in a quandary. Austrians in general - and Freedom Party supporters in particular - have always had a struggle to acknowledge their complicity in the crimes of the Third Reich, but denial of the Holocaust remains completely taboo.

As his sacking of Mr Gudehus shows, Mr Haider clearly is trying to distance himself from the more extreme elements of his party. The prospect of his inclusion in government at the 17 December poll, however, still fills many Austrians with trepidation.



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are infiltrating SPD territory. The temptation to jump on the anti-EU bandwagon thus be hard to resist.

The Christian Democrats have warned that under management the SPD will abandon its commitment to monetary union, and the mantle of Europe's saviour from a feeble currency. The government's bogeyman is cerebral Oskar Lafontaine, the SPD's candidate for the chancellorship in their 1990 election disaster. "Lafontaine will whip up fears against European currency, just as he whipped up fears in 1990 against German unification," warned Wolfgang Schäuble, Kohl's parliamentary deputy. Lafontaine may soon



Oskar Lafontaine: set to 'whip up fears' for D-mark

a second bite at the cherry. The Social Democrats are trailing 13 points behind Mr Kohl's party, and are facing a string of disastrous regional elections, starting in Berlin on Sunday. The battle to oust Mr Scharping has commenced, with Mr Lafontaine firing the most powerful salvoes. Whoever comes out on top, the outcome spells trouble for Europe.

Even within Mr Kohl's party, a growing number of politicians are raising doubts about the wisdom of allowing foreign governments a role in Germany's obsessive battle against inflation. Yielding to this pressure, the CDU has been forced to harden its stance, resolving to insist on strict monetary discipline in the participating countries even after 1999. If the debate turns bitter, and the SPD manages to exploit the divisions, the German locomotive could yet be slowed.

**Sack for Holocaust MP**

ADRIAN BRIDGE

Central Europe Correspondent

under the Nazi regime, saying: "I'll stay out of that one."

The MP's evasiveness put his leader in a quandary. Austrians in general - and Freedom Party supporters in particular - have always had a struggle to acknowledge their complicity in the crimes of the Third Reich, but denial of the Holocaust remains completely taboo.

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## international

# Gaddafi vows to expel a million

Beirut — If the story of Palestine is symbolised by ships — carrying those who wish to live there towards or away from the promised land — then the voyage of the *Countess M* fits rather neatly into the tragic saga.

With 650 Palestinians on board, more than half women and children, the old car ferry was riding the swell five miles off Larnaca last night with its homeless passengers unable to land in Syria but equally unable to return to Libya. As part of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's latest enforced exodus, the last place they were likely to find shelter was the land their parents and grandparents left in the dying days of the British mandate of Palestine.

To blame for their immediate plight was Col Gaddafi, whose latest promise — to expel a million expatriate workers across the desert if they are not allowed to leave by air — is threatening to diminish even the Palestinians' calamity. The United Nations' sanctions committee chairman said last night that the deportation of a million civilians would be a human catastrophe; Col Gaddafi, of course, wants the UN sanctions on Libya — imposed because of its alleged role in the Lockerbie bombing — lifted so that international air links with Tripoli and Benghazi can be restored.

The latest victims of the colonel's cynical pragmatism remained uncomplaining on their ship off Larnaca last night, with the port authorities in Cyprus as unwilling to allow them to land as the Syrian immigration officers at Latakia had been a few hours earlier. Driven out of their homes in Libya, the Palestinians on board the *Countess M* were given food and water, while their Greek captain refused to leave Cyprus.

But does the colonel really intend to throw a million people out of Libya? This is the same man who threatened national unity with Egypt and Syria, who predicted the overthrow of the United States, the destruction of Israel and the collapse of the Gulf sheikhdoms, the same man who offered to give his seat on the Arab League to Yitzhak Rabin's government on the grounds that the rest of the Arab world had become allies of Israel. Certainly, Col Gaddafi — once one of the most wall-postered and honourable nationalist revolutionaries — is worried about a real revolution, that of the growing

Islamist movement which opposes his deeply corrupt regime. Intelligence sources, quoted in the latest issue of *Web Tres Urgent*, the French intelligence community's favourite house magazine, believe he was the target of an assassination attempt in Sirt on 17 September, when two men were reported to have opened fire on the Libyan leader when he stepped out of his armoured Toyota. Both were captured by his bodyguards. The shooting followed at least two clashes in Benghazi between Col Gaddafi's security men and Islamist militants. His suspicion that some of the

500,000 Sudanese living in Libya — none of them holding official work-permits — may have been involved, led almost at once to the expulsion of thousands of members of the expatriate community. Hundreds of Palestinians were sent to the Egyptian border and 13,000 Sudanese were trucked south. They were expected to arrive at the Sudanese frontier by the end of this week.

The UN has meanwhile rejected Libya's request to repatriate 1,067 "illegal infiltrators" by air. The figure includes not only the half-million Sudanese but 300,000 Chadians, 250,000 men and women from Mali, Niger, and others from Nigeria, Niger, Ivory Coast, Benin, Senegal, Ghana, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau.

As for the 650 Palestinians of Cyprus, they were visited by a Palestinian diplomat yesterday, while a pregnant passenger was flown by a British military aircraft to Larnaca hospital for the birth of her child. Palestinian authorities are urging Syria to accept the passengers, all of whom have agreed that they cannot return to Libya; the authorities there, they have reported, confiscated both their property and their money.

Plight of Palestinian refugees would be dwarfed if the latest threat is carried out, writes Robert Fisk



Voyage of despair: Passengers on the 'Countess M'. More than half the deportees, expelled by Libya, are women and children. Photograph: AP

## Saudis behead twelfth woman

Yet another woman — the 12th in less than three years — has been publicly beheaded in Saudi Arabia after a secret trial, writes Robert Fisk.

Bint bin Mohamed Ali, a Nigerian, was executed by sword in a Riyadh market place for allegedly trying to smuggle heroin into the kingdom. Three Nigerian men were charged with her and they, too, have since been decapitated. The four executions — along with that

of a Pakistani man — bring to 191 the number of those who have suffered capital punishment in Saudi Arabia this year.

As usual, neither any details of the alleged crimes, nor the hearings of the Islamic courts which condemned the four, have been disclosed by the Saudi authorities.

Saudi trials are often carried out without defence lawyers, and have been widely condemned by human rights

groups. A mother and daughter were among the eleven other women beheaded in Saudi Arabia since January 1993. ■ Al-Ain — The Filipino maid Sarah Balabagan, embracing her parents for the first time since escaping execution for the killing of her United Arab Emirates employer, said she was confident of being freed "soon". Ms Balabagan said she would never again leave her country to work, Reuters reports.

## Iraq denounces US 'viper' in verse

Baghdad (Reuters) — The Iraqi government's daily newspaper again attacked the US ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, yesterday, this time in English verse.

Iraq sees Ms Albright as the main force behind the United Nations sanctions, still in force against Iraq four years after the Gulf war. The Iraqi media often refer to her as "the viper".

A 15-stanza poem by the Iraqi poet Ghazay Dira al-Tai,

published in *al-Jumhouriya*, advised Ms Albright: "Before you speak about Iraq, wash out your mouth."

The fourth stanza runs: "Albright, your heart is black. But love is white. The facts are bright. But you put off the light. In the middle of the night. Albright, you can't climb the Iraqi palm

Because of its height. Albright, All you say about Iraq Is not right. Iraq is not the house of dark. It is the source of light. The 10th stanza adds: Albright, Before you go to bed, Remember that many thousands Of Iraqi children will become dead Because of the blockade."

Advertisement Feature

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## international

# Balkan diplomacy: Belgrade and Sarajevo to exchange liaison offices as ceasefire starts to take hold in the north-west

## Serbia and Bosnia take first steps to recognition

EMMA DALY  
Sarajevo  
CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY  
London

The governments of Bosnia and rump Yugoslavia, which comprises Serbia and Montenegro, agreed yesterday to open liaison offices in each other's capitals, a move that should pave the way to full diplomatic recognition.

Future Bosnian elections were also discussed at talks yesterday in Sarajevo and Belgrade, with international mediators emphasising their determination to counter the effects of "ethnic cleansing" and restore a multi-national electorate. The three mediators – the American Richard Holbrooke, Carl Bildt of the European Union and Igor Ivanov of Russia – warned of a tortuous road ahead, but sounded fairly optimistic about the peace talks at the end of the month in the United States.

"The road ahead is very daunting and we are overwhelmed by the tasks ahead of us," Mr Holbrooke said, describing the deal to open liaison offices as "a small step on a difficult and long road". But Mr Bildt, who discussed the elections on Tuesday night with Momcilo Krajisnik, a senior Bosnian Serb official, said he expected a vote within a year.

"We don't want elections that ratify ethnic cleansing," Mr Bildt told reporters. One suggestion is that Bosnian citizens may be entitled to vote by post for representatives in their pre-war districts. But that raises the question of how to get the Bosnian Serb secessionist regime in Pale to agree to a deal that would overturn all its efforts to carve out an ethnically pure state. Under the post-war principles agreed so far, the Serb entity in Bosnia would provide a third of the MPs for a national

parliament: their homogeneity would be seriously compromised if Muslims and Croats expelled from Serb-held lands were able to vote for those MPs.

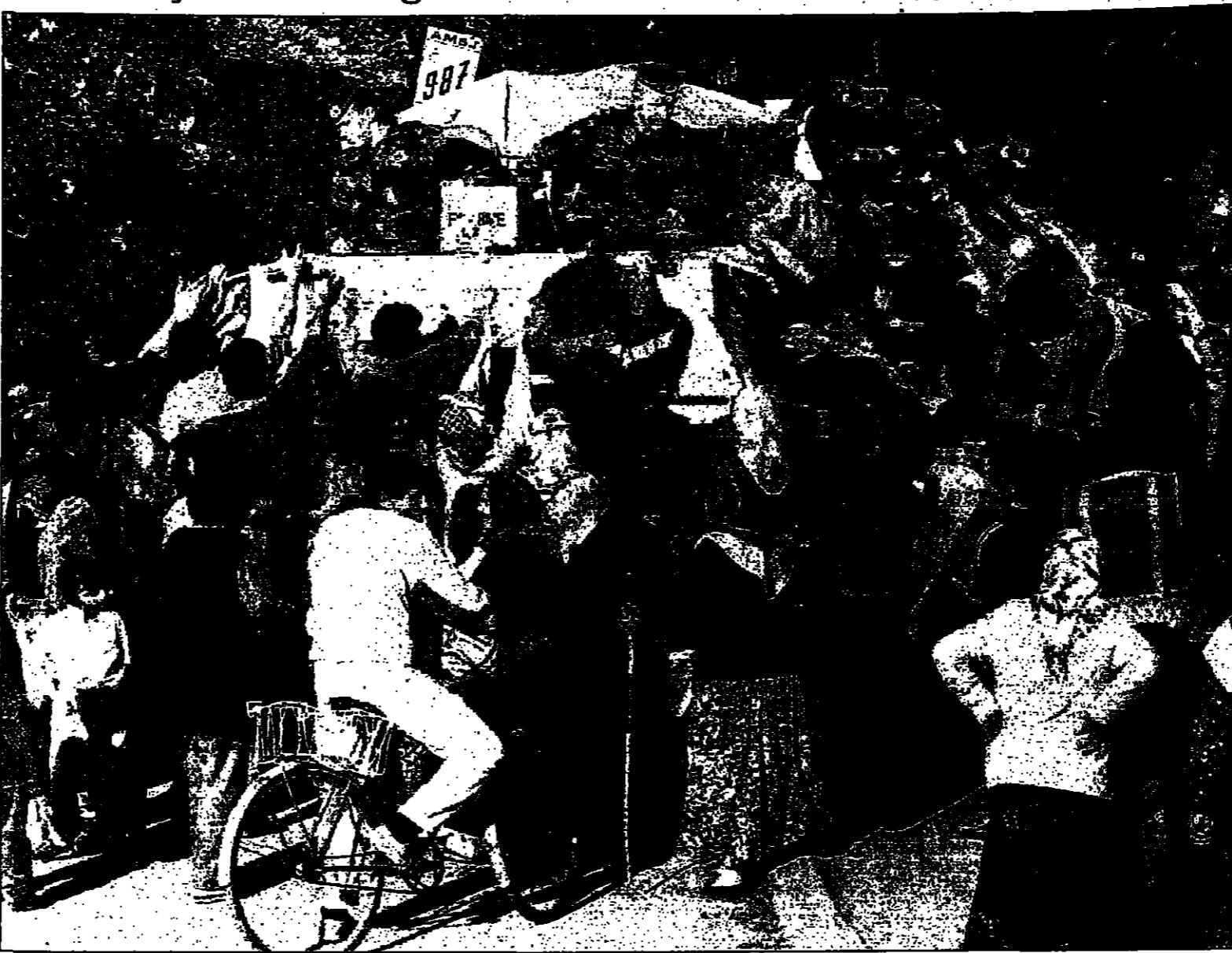
The week-old ceasefire appeared to be holding yesterday, although UN troops have been prevented from getting to the new front line after rapid advances by Croat and Bosnian government troops in the past month, with more atrocities against non-Serbs discovered in their wake.

The UN refugee agency yesterday released a report claiming that more than 100 non-Serb civilians had been killed in Bosanski Novi, in north-west Bosnia, before the Serbs withdrew, and that there had been more rape and murder of non-Serbs in Prijedor. Local sources said the troops responsible belonged to the notorious Serb commander "Arkan".

Bosnian government forces on Tuesday finally gave British peace-keepers access to some of the territory they have gained – but it was a road captured nearly a year ago, and 20 miles south of the new front line.

The British UN forces yesterday sent their first convoy down route "Albatross", the road from Kupres, which was captured by Bosnian-government troops last November, to Bugojno. The UN had hoped to be able to use the route – a third road into central Bosnia – almost immediately, but the Bosnians denied access until they had pushed more than 20 miles to the north.

British UN troops in Bosnia remain infuriated by what they describe as "cat and mouse" tactics used by Bosnian government forces to keep them away from areas now far from the battle lines. The speed of the Croat-Muslim advance in north-west Bosnia has left a vacuum unsupervised by the UN.



Relief: French peace-keepers handing out food in Gorazde after Serbs finally allowed the UN vehicles through

MICHAEL SHERIDAN  
Diplomatic Editor

The European Union has rebuffed Croatia by deciding it will receive no future privileges in its dealings with the EU but will be treated the same as other "successor states" to the former Yugoslavia under new "Balkan agreements" with Brussels. It is a sign that Croatia's human rights violations and authoritarianism have ruined its aspirations to advance towards EU membership ahead of any rival Balkans states. It will cast a shadow over the campaign by President Franjo Tudjman's "free-market" HDZ party for elections on 29 October.

EU-Croatia talks on a trade and co-operation deal were frozen after the Croatian August offensive against Serb rebels, which boosted Mr Tudjman's popularity. The conquest was followed by accounts of looting and murders of Serb civilians. International efforts are now under way to persuade the Croatian leadership to desist from an attack on the Serb redoubt of Eastern Slavonia.

The new policy, formulated in the expectation of an overall peace settlement, is a decisive rejection of Mr Tudjman's assertion that Croatia has a greater claim than its neighbours to represent the values of west European civilisation. It is not clear whether Germany and Austria, Croatia's closest friends in the EU, will continue to argue that Zagreb should receive better treatment than Belgrade or Sarajevo. That argument has already met high-level opposition from negotiators who believe that, unless the EU takes a collective approach, each Balkan state will try to advance itself and block its rivals, creating new tensions.

European Union leaders have therefore been urged to evolve a common set of framework agreements with all the states south of Slovenia and north of Greece. They are: Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia (in its Muslim-Croat and Serb constituents), Albania and Macedonia. The aim is to avoid any impression the old Yugoslavia is being recreated.

## Ohio base chosen to instil an air of peace

RUPERT CORNWELL  
Washington

It does not quite have the class of Camp David. But as a site for the Bosnian peace talks the Wright-Patterson Air Force base, in western Ohio, is perhaps even more suitable – bristling with the instruments of US air power which, operating under Nato guise, did as much as anything to bring the reluctant participants to the bargaining table in the first place.

In normal times, Wright-Patterson is a sprawling facility home to servicemen and their families, 23,000 in all, best known for its links with the Wright brothers and the world's largest museum of military avi-

ation. But as the Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, announced yesterday, from 31 October it will be where Presidents Milosevic of Serbia, Tudjman of Croatia and Izetbegovic of Bosnia, prodded by 200 aides and diplomats from the Contact Group, will try for a settlement of the Balkan war.

In most respects it fits the bill perfectly. The base, outside Dayton, is big enough to house everyone in ample, similar quarters. It is, by definition, secure and well protected. One hour's flight from Washington and New York, it is easily accessible for important visitors like Mr Christopher, but too far away for an instant dash by a disgruntled negotiator to the net-

work television studios. The

ability to keep the press at bay is among Wright-Patterson's greatest charms. It "affords the kind of privacy that is necessary, we believe, to conduct a successful negotiation", Mr Christopher told the House National Security Committee. Apart from a pre-talks tour of the site, and the formal opening ceremony, the media will be kept beyond the perimeter.

A "partial news black-out" will operate, the State Department said, and what briefings there are will be held in Washington. If there is a "Dayton agreement" it will be initialled there and signed formally in Paris a few days later. But, as US officials acknowledge, there is

no guarantee the talks will succeed – one reason they will not be held at Camp David.

Such apprehensions are shared on Capitol Hill, where misgivings are widespread at the

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## international

## French to join nuclear free zone in the Pacific

DAVID USBORNE  
New York

Britain, France and the United States are to announce shortly that they are joining the South Pacific nuclear-free zone — once the French nuclear tests at Mururoa Atoll are finished.

It will be seen as an effort by London and Washington to help France to rebuild diplomatic and political bridges in the region, shattered by the resumption of tests last month. Paris will also commit itself to closing its test facilities at Mururoa once it has completed its experiments in May.

All three Western nuclear powers — France, Britain and the US — are expected to pledge adherence to the 1985 Treaty of Rarotonga, which established a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific.

The announcement, to be made simultaneously in Paris, London and Washington, is likely as early as tomorrow, diplomatic sources in New York confirmed. "It is 99 per cent certain, although there are a couple of wrinkles left to iron out," one European diplomat insisted.

Ironically, Australia only yesterday voiced formal disappointment before the UN's General Assembly that the three countries had still not joined the Rarotonga Treaty. The deputy Australian ambassador to the UN, Richard Rowe, said an announcement reversing that stance would mitigate some, but not all, of the ill-feeling against France. "It's good news as far as it goes, but our position still remains that France has got to stop testing."

On the broader issue of testing, the US is pressing for a statement from the nuclear powers setting 30 April 1996 as the deadline for agreeing a final text in the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban talks in Geneva. President Bill Clinton, who may commit his administration to the deadline when he addresses the UN on Sunday, is anxious to accelerate work towards the test ban.

If a text can be settled by the end of April, the way would be clear for final signature in October next year, enabling him to claim credit ahead of the US presidential elections in November. There is scepticism among European officials whether an April deadline is practicable, however. One said that there was a reluctance to appear to be "dragged along by the Americans".

## IN BRIEF

### Swedish deputy PM to be investigated

Stockholm — Sweden's public prosecutor decided yesterday to investigate Mona Sahlin's admitted misuse of an official credit card, but political support for the Deputy Prime Minister grew with a strong endorsement from the Prime Minister, Ingvar Carlsson. "I believe that Mona Sahlin is an unusual and talented politician; she is knowledgeable, capable, strong and courageous," he said. Other ministers said they would not fill the void left by her decision announced on Tuesday night to postpone her bid for the Social Democratic Party's leadership after Mr Carlsson stepped down as planned next March.

By signing protocols attached to the Treaty of Rarotonga, the three countries will commit themselves to its main provisions forbidding the use,



### No proof of Claes's guilt

Brussels — A report by a special Belgian parliamentary commission released yesterday said there was no firm proof of Willy Claes's guilt in a corruption scandal that threatens his career as Nato Secretary-General. Mr Claes was accused of corruption when he was economics minister in 1988-89. The report will form the basis for a vote by members of parliament today on whether to send Mr Claes to court.

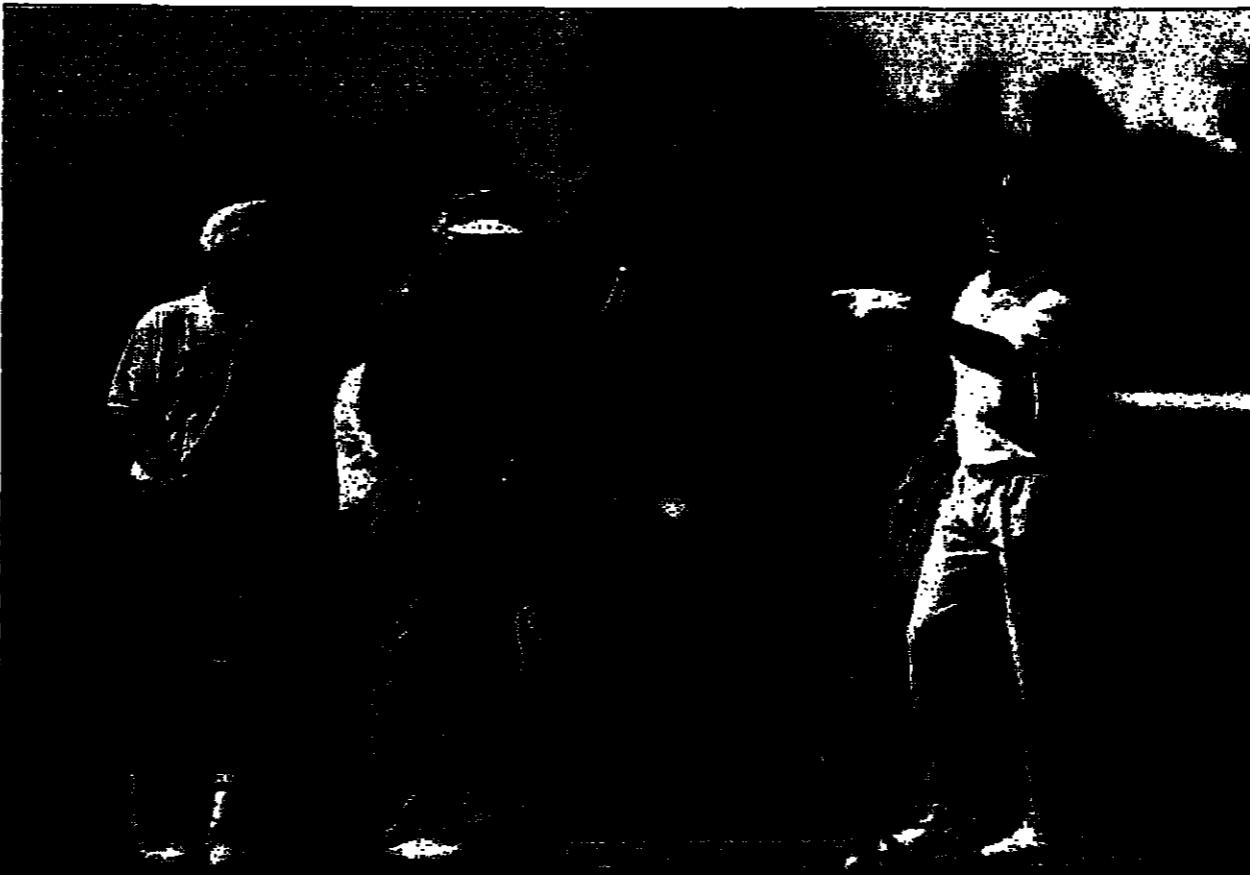
### North Korea blamed for breaking truce

Seoul — The United Nations Command backed South Korea yesterday, blaming North Korea for violating a truce agreement by sending out armed infiltrators, one of whom was shot dead by South Korean troops. A second North Korean infiltrator who survived Tuesday's shooting slipped back across the border, Seoul's Defence Ministry said yesterday.

### Soldier risks trial over UN uniform

Frankfurt — The US Army said it has charged a 22-year-old medic with disobeying an order for refusing to wear the UN blue beret and patch. His commanding general will decide whether Michael New will face court-martial. Mr New was to have been deployed to Macedonia for peace-keeping duty.

**Call phone boss accused of drug links**  
Rome — The head of Call's phone company, Emcali, was in police custody yesterday on suspicion he tapped phones for drug traffickers. Adolfo Gallon turned himself in Tuesday to police in Calli, home to the world's largest drug syndicate. Police arrested the car's alleged communications chief, Gilberto Mora, on suspicion he bugged top officials' phones for the cartel.



Charm offensive: OJ Simpson (right) preparing to make a putt during the first round of golf he has played since his acquittal. During his round, he stopped to talk to several people and posed for pictures 'with the ladies'. Photograph: AP

## OJ gets back in golfing swing

Panama City Beach, Florida (AP) — OJ Simpson has made his first public foray since his murder acquittal, playing golf, posing for pictures and signing autographs.

Joking that he had not practised in 17 months — the period of his arrest and trial before being acquitted of murdering his ex-wife Nicole Brown and a friend, Ronald Goldman — Mr Simpson played at the Hombre Golf Club on Tuesday, watched by his girlfriend Paula Barbieri. "He played pretty good," said Joe Inman — a grounds supervisor, who partnered him during a 10-over par round of 82.

While he played, Mr Simpson reportedly missed his daughter Sydney's 10th birthday. She was back home in California, the *New York Post* reported.

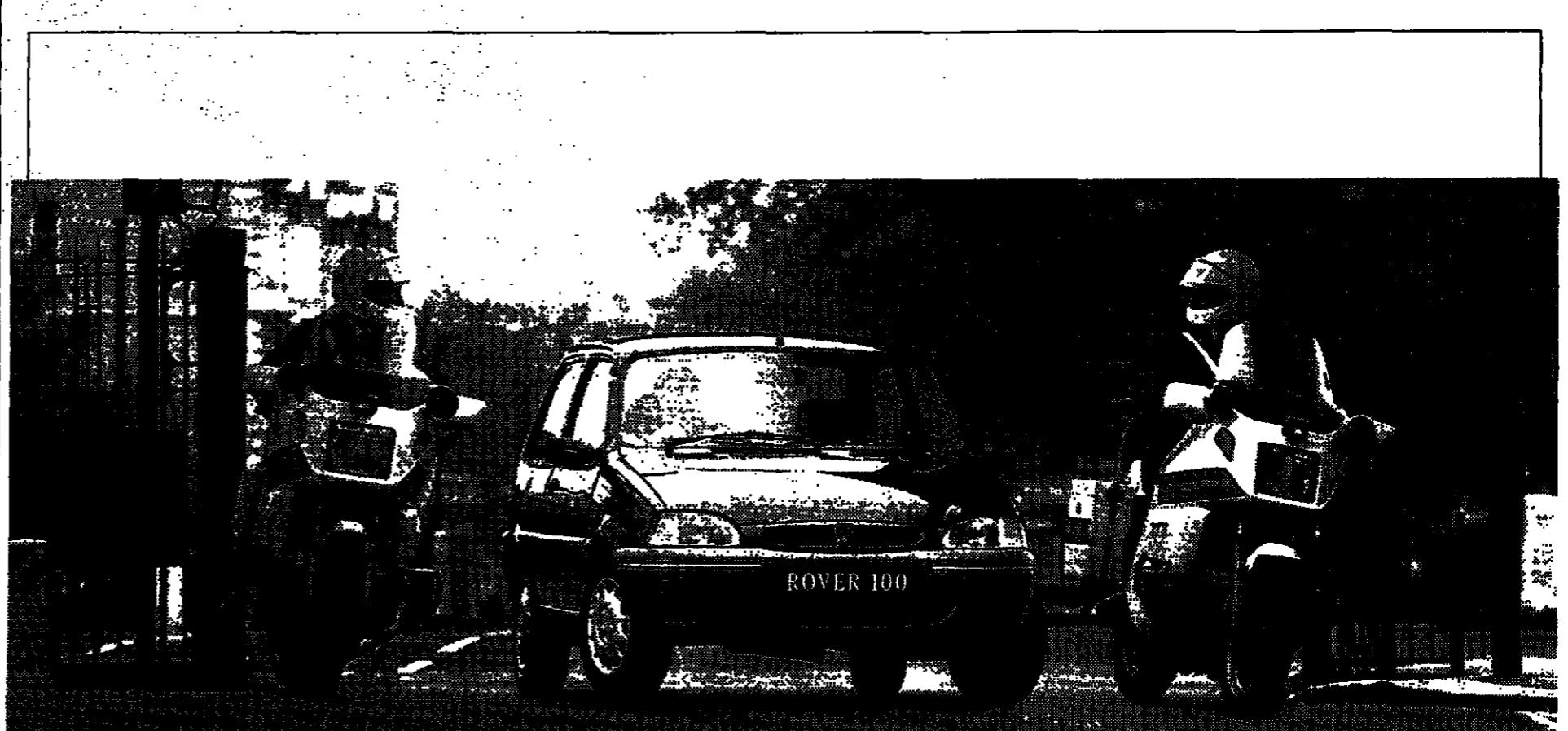
Mr Barbieri, whose family lives in the area, watched from a golf cart and left a short time later. Mr Simpson did his best to charm the public. "He took the time and stopped more than once with people on the course," said Mr Inman. "I

guess word got around. They were coming out of their houses. He took pictures with some of the ladies."

Mr Simpson's lawyers claimed he was chipping golf balls in his darkened mansion while the murders took place — an alibi that was ridiculed by prosecutors.

Extracts from the private diary of Ms Brown Simpson, telling of a marriage destroyed by abuse and hatred, were published this week by the *National Enquirer*, a weekly tabloid newspaper. Further extracts are promised next week. According to the report, Ms Simpson told her wife to get an abortion when she was two months pregnant with their son Justin and called her "a fat pig" and a "slob".

National Enquirer executive editor Steve Coz said the diary was supplied to the tabloid by "someone who was very concerned about spousal abuse". He said the diary had been authenticated by Ms Brown Simpson's father, Lou Brown, as being written by his daughter.



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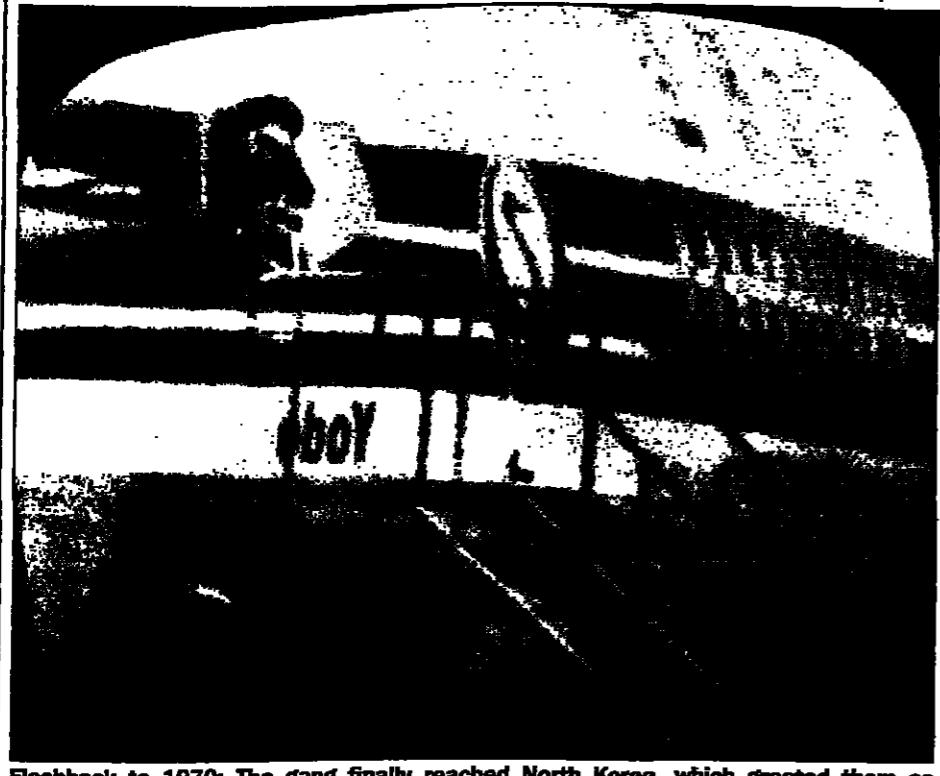
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## international

# Japanese Red Army terrorists dream of going home



Flashback to 1970: The gang finally reached North Korea, which greeted them as heroes but the welcome is wearing thin and now there is a whiff of nostalgia in the air

Tokyo — "I hope they will be able to visit me in Japan," says Tomoko Konishi. "They're lovely girls, you know. Very nice, decent, normal Japanese girls." The photograph bears her out: in it, Mrs Konishi, 74, stands stiffly with her two granddaughters — pretty, rather earnest-looking teenagers who stare unsmilingly into the camera. But, whatever their grannie thinks, Ritsuko and Yumi Konishi are not your average Japanese schoolgirls. The family reunion she is planning is reopening a 25-year-old controversy about one of Japan's most notorious crimes.

At the centre of the case is Takahiro Konishi, 51, son of Tomoko and father of the two girls. In March 1970, as leader of the Red Army Faction, he led one of the most sensational hijackings in history. Nine student revolutionaries, armed with guns and swords, seized a Japan Airlines jet carrying 138 people. After landing in South Korea, they swapped the passengers and crew for a single hostage: the Japanese deputy minister of transport, who had

volunteered to take their place. From Seoul they flew to Pyongyang, where they were welcomed by North Korea as heroes and political refugees. The Japanese demanded their repatriation but, lacking diplomatic relations with Pyongyang, they were ignored.

Other Red Army members in Japan were imprisoned for planning the crime but from North Korea almost no news was heard. Then came a remarkable disclosure: three years ago, in an interview with a Japanese newspaper, the late dictator, Kim Il Sung, referred to the hijackers in unflattering terms: "They cannot truly be called revolutionaries, because they live comfortably with their wives and children." The hijackers, it turned out, had Japanese wives, Red Army sympathisers who had smuggled themselves into North Korea via Eastern Europe.

Supporters' groups began visiting Mr Konishi and his

comrades and uncovered new surprises: for years, Pyongyang supported them; but recently, as it made twitchy attempts to attract Western aid, its welcome for the terrorists appears to have cooled. In 1990, the government withdrew financial support. The erstwhile student terrorists now run their own travel agency and import-export business, trading with former Communist states.

But North Korea's economy is in crisis after summer floods and wretched harvests; there are predictions of famine. Since the death of Kim last year, few observers know who commands power. Understandably, all but one of the hijackers now wish to return to Japan.

At present, the children are stateless. On her recent visit, Mrs Konishi obtained her granddaughters' birth certificates and this month they were submitted to the authorities with the aim of obtaining passports for the sisters. The case is unprecedented and Japan's Byzantine bureaucracy is sure to take a good deal of time reaching a decision. But Mr Yamamoto is confident that all the

hijackers' children will eventually return to Japan.

What awaits them when they do? Quite apart from the inevitable suspicion that they are spies, Japanese society is notoriously intolerant of former exiles. Even children who have grown up in Europe or America often face bullying and alienation when they return to Japan.

There is a tendency, too, to project the sins of the fathers on to succeeding generations. The children of another public enemy — Shoko Asahara, guru of the Aum Shinri Kyo sect, suspected of the sarin-gas attack on the Tokyo subway in March — are facing this problem in their home town, where suspicious parents are resisting attempts to enroll them in the local school.

As a family, the Konishis can live together only in North Korea. "Unless they can all come back together, it cannot be a homecoming in the real sense," says Mrs Konishi. "My granddaughters are innocent, but I expect a lot of difficulties ahead."

## Honeymoon over in US trade talks with China

TERESA POOLE  
Peking

Fourteen months ago, the US Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown, bounded on to the stage in Peking waving a list of nearly \$60bn (£40bn) of new deals for American companies, trumpeting a new era of "commercial diplomacy" and patting himself on the back for China's decision to resume the bilateral human rights dialogue.

That was then. Yesterday it was a more sober Mr Brown who admitted that Sino-US official contacts "cannot be expected to produce instant results". There were no photo-opportunity contract signings, perhaps because it has emerged this week that more than \$35bn of last year's "deals" have yet to be consummated. There was no indication that China had offered Mr Brown any firm commitments to open its markets, or to adhere to this year's

commitment to making it work is often easy to lose amid the stories about week-to-week problems," Mr Brown told the American Chamber of Commerce in Peking.

In his meeting with President Jiang yesterday, Mr Brown delivered a message which, he said, "clearly indicates President Clinton's view of the importance of the relationship". Talking to Associated Press after the meeting, Mr Brown was upbeat: "I came at a time when if there was continued extension of tension in our relationship the Chinese would have had the opportunity to communicate it to me, and they didn't."

Despite Mr Brown's optimism, most of the traditional points of friction will still be on the table next week when the two presidents meet. Lee Sands, the assistant trade representative, warned earlier this month that the US expected its trade deficit with China to reach \$38bn this year, and as much as \$50bn next year. Mr Brown refused to make his own forecast, but admitted: "The trade deficit is too high."

Mr Brown said he was lobbying hard during this visit for up to \$20bn of contracts for which American firms were bidding against international competition. But the update on last year's deals was less than overwhelming. "We too are frustrated by the lack of progress.... Not a single major private power project has come to fruition in China. Not one."

Apart from obstructive Chinese bureaucracy, the main stumbling block has been financing and the issue of whether Peking will guarantee project debt raised by the provinces. Mr Brown said he had been assured by Chinese officials that the US projects "are moving through the process".

Peking, for its part, accuses the US of blocking its application to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Entry to the WTO has become the most powerful tool for the US to force open China's market, and yesterday Mr Brown repeated that China's entry must be "on commercial terms".

In a positive sign for Peking, he added: "It is hard to conceive of a WTO in 1996 that does not include China."



Ron Brown: Frustrated by 'lack of progress' in China

anti-piracy pact. There was no sign of the US trade deficit with China levelling off. Nor has the supposed human rights dialogue produced any tangible results over the past year.

Such are the realities for a US official on his or her second visit to China. But Mr Brown is the highest-level American official to come to Peking since June, when the Taiwanese President, Lee Teng-hui, visited the US, scuppering Sino-US relations. So the Secretary of Commerce was anxious yesterday to set a constructive tone for next Friday's meeting in New York between President Bill Clinton and his Chinese counterpart, Jiang Zemin. "The centrality of this relationship and our absolute

## Deng's would-be heir shows military muscle

Peking (Reuters) — The Chinese Communist Party chief Jiang Zemin was shown on television yesterday presiding over dramatic naval exercises — including rocket firings and marine landings — with his new military command huddled around him.

The state broadcast appeared to be designed to show Mr Jiang commanding absolute support in the People's Liberation Army, seen as crucial to his bid to succeed Deng Xiaoping, now 91, as China's leader. It also sent a clear message to Taiwan, quoting soldiers as vowing, under Mr Jiang, to "safeguard the reunification of the motherland" — that is, to return the Nationalist-ruled

island to mainland control.

Mr Jiang's display of military clout came less than a week before his 24 October summit with President Bill Clinton and his address to the United Nations the same day. The exercise could touch off new criticism from China's neighbours, who fear the military ambitions of an economically resurgent and well-armed Asian superpower.

"Comrades, how bitterly you struggle!" Mr Jiang shouted through loudspeakers to sailors.

"Serve the people!" the crew responded in unison to Mr Jiang, who commands the armed forces as chairman of the Communist Party's Central Military Commission.

## Engines of change

Appearing at the Paris Motor Show

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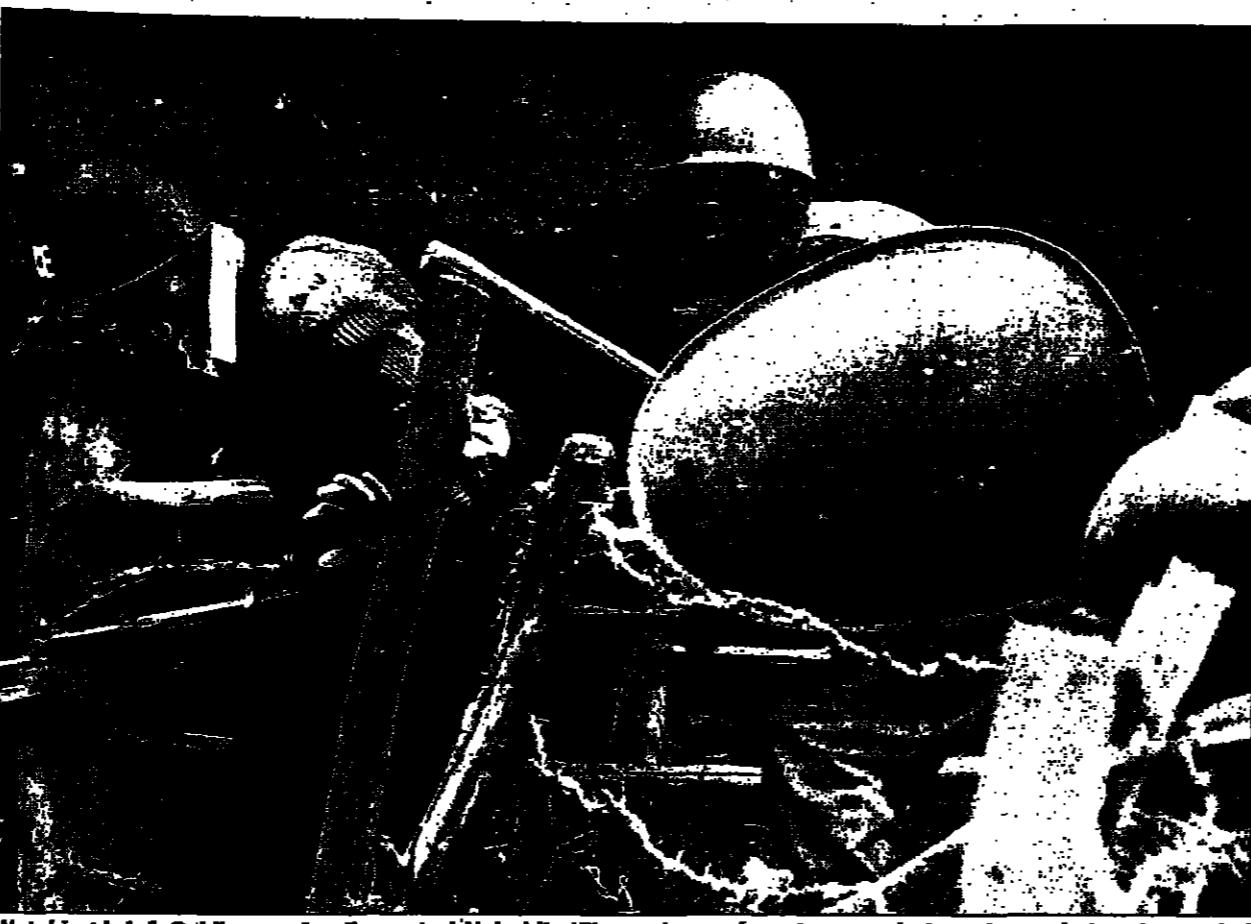
## Sentenced to death by disease

Nairobi (Reuters) — An average of three prisoners die each day in Kenya's congested prisons, the Home Affairs Minister, Francis Lotodo, has told parliament. The main causes of death were Aids-related ailments, malaria, meningitis and diarrhoeal diseases.

From January to the end of September, said Mr Lotodo, 819 inmates died. Of these, 291 were on remand. He added that lack of money meant his ministry could do nothing to improve prison conditions.

A High Court judge has said that "jailing anyone is like sending them to a death chamber". The Attorney-General, Amos Wako, last week urged magistrates and judges not to send law-breakers to jail for petty offences. Last week President Daniel arap Moi set free 10,898 prisoners, mostly petty offenders, who had less than six months of their sentences left to serve.

Government figures show that in July, Kenya's 78 prisons, with a designed capacity of 21,000, held 37,066 inmates.



Watching brief: Soldiers and police patrol Nairobi's Kibera slums where two people have been shot and wounded in fierce ethnic fighting, sparked by the death of a Nubian man whose body was found on Sunday. Photograph: AP

## international

### Italy's fake invalids slow down the mail

In one village, 500 people out of 1,500 were registered disabled. Andrew Gumbel reports on the 'invalidipoli' scandal

Rome — We always knew the Italian postal system was awful, but now we know why. Thanks to the revelations of a Roman investigating magistrate, we learn that what ought to be a thriving modern communications industry is being run by an army of invalids.

Almost 17,000 invalids to be exact, all of them with medical certificates to prove how handicapped they are. No wonder nothing works properly. Far from railing against what is arguably the worst public service in Europe, our hearts ought to be filled with compassion.

That lithe young woman scowling at her newspaper instead of attending to the long line of customers in front of her may not look unwell, but she has in fact got Parkinson's disease. Don't be hard on the man who seductively orders you to pull all

the staples out of your padded envelope before he will accept it for posting; he has a painful curvature of the spine.

And go easy on the postmen

who take a week to carry letters across town, or several months to send them out of the country. Many should be in wheelchairs, and they carry out their task only out of a strong sense of civic duty.

That's the official version of events. The investigating magistrate, Giorgio Castellucci, has his doubts, particularly since he discovered that one "handicapped" postal worker plays football on his afternoons off, that another has a second job as a gym teacher and that a third is an aspiring fashion model whose severe mobility problem disappears on the catwalk.

Welcome to *invalidipoli*, the latest scandal to erupt in this scandal-prone country. It has never been a secret that fake invalidity certificates were a dime a dozen in Italy — about one in two is false — but never before has anything this systematic been uncovered.

According to Mr Castellucci, the post office scam costs the state billions of lire in fraudulent invalidity benefits, as well as doing a disservice to the genuinely disabled, who are being squeezed out of badly needed jobs.

He has indicted 90 people, including doctors, health officials and post office managers, as well as the fake invalids themselves. He expects the final number of people sent for trial to exceed 2,500.

The scam dates back to the late 1980s, when the Post and Telecommunications Ministry was in the hands of the small, now defunct, Social Democratic party. According to the prosecution, the then post office minister, Carlo Vizzini, and his friends, handed out jobs to the sons and daughters of influential associates like sandwiches at a party, using a quota on employment of the disabled as a way of sneaking them through the back door.

Normally, disabled people would be selected by public sector competition, but in much of the country, particularly the Rome area, Naples and Sicily, the fake invalids were hired directly.

In one Sicilian village, Milletto Rosmarino, where the Social Democrats were keen to gather votes, about 500 of the 1,500-strong population were at one point registered as disabled. Many were inscribed illegally on the local electoral roll — registered as living at the

then mayor's house — even though they lived and worked in post offices in other parts of Sicily.

Whole families lived off the salaries and pensions from the scam, and returned the favour by propping up the Social Democrats' small share of the Italian vote.

Milletto Rosmarino was cleaned up three years ago, following an investigation by the Catholic magazine *Famiglia Cristiana*, a publication memorably denounced as "pornographic" by the head of the local health authority, who is now in jail. The disabled population has since fallen to fewer than 20.

The rest of Italy is only now waking up to the scale of the scandal. Since Mr Castellucci launched his investigation a few weeks ago, one post office building in Rome which contains personnel records has mysteriously caught fire, while documents on disability registration at a major public health centre in the capital have vanished into thin air. The number of people turning up at public offices to claim disability benefit has suddenly dropped by several thousand.

The post office scandal gives and insight into what happens when an essential public service is used for years as a pork-barrel for nepotism. The results have been catastrophic. The post arrives hopelessly late or not at all. Service is surly and inefficient. Bloated staffing levels have blown a huge hole in the already debt-ridden national finances.

The new mayor of Milletto Rosmarino, Nuccio Carrara, estimates that 55,000 of the post office's 200,000-odd salaried positions need to be cut. He believes the judiciary may have been deliberately tipped off about the invalidity scandal by post office managers, keen to axe jobs without offending the powerful public sector unions.

The most serious losers, whatever happens, will be the country's real disabled, who have always suffered in silence in a country which considers them a source of shame and mostly keeps them hidden behind closed doors.

About 10,000 are looking for work in Rome alone. Every six months the state assigns 600 of them to subsidised private sector jobs, but 90 per cent are immediately rejected. In the last year, the state administration has taken on only 35 genuinely disabled people — compared with the thousands registered as handicapped who are in fact as fit as fiddles.

### British meeting with Nigerians provokes anger

MICHAEL SHERIDAN  
Diplomatic Editor

The British government is coming under pressure to take a tougher stand against the Nigerian military regime after a quiet and apparently cordial series of meetings between Nigerian emissaries and British officials this week.

Britain is trying to stave off demands for sanctions against Nigeria at next month's Commonwealth summit, fearing British commercial interests could be damaged. But other Commonwealth governments are likely to heed the advice of a recent fact-finding mission, which concluded that only sanctions could help to restore democracy in West Africa's largest country.

The mission recommended a study of a possible oil embargo and measures to freeze the personal bank accounts and assets of members of the regime. It warned that Nigeria could dissolve into civil strife if the army held on to power.

There has been fresh opposition criticism of British policy after visits to London by the Nigerian Finance Minister, Anthony Ani, and Chief Ernest Shonkan, a personal representative of the Nigerian military leader, General Sami Abacha. The two men, who were on their way home from talks in Washington with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on Nigeria's debt, spoke at meetings organised by the Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce, intended to boost investment in the country.

General Abacha has reacted to criticism from abroad by announcing a three-year timetable for the restoration of civilian rule, and by exercising clemency towards 40 people accused of plotting a coup.

on Tuesday, although a Foreign Office spokesman said only one junior official attended. The Foreign Office maintains it aims to persuade General Abacha to release political prisoners and restore democracy. "At the moment the idea is to put the maximum pressure on Abacha to accelerate the reform process," a British official said.

Labour's foreign affairs spokesman, Tony Lloyd, yesterday called on the Government to examine the feasibility



General Abacha: threat of Commonwealth sanctions

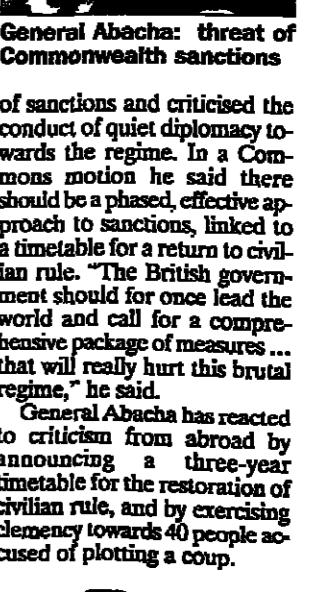
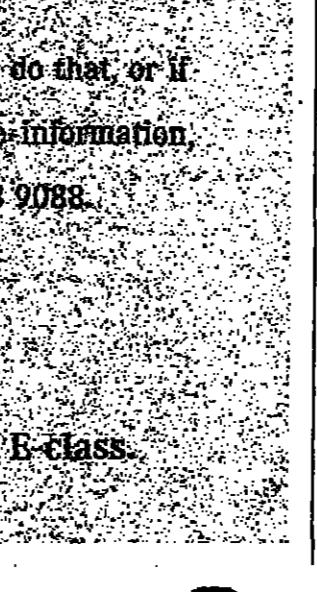
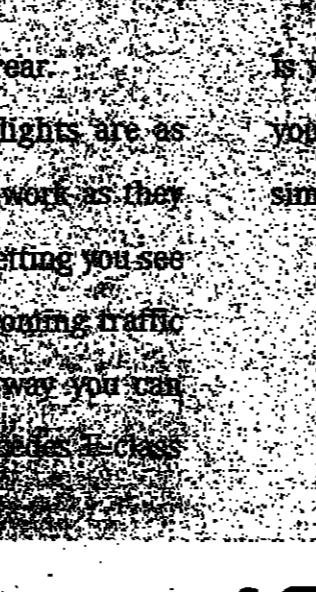
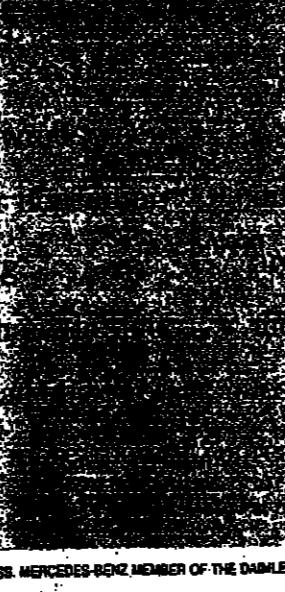
of sanctions and criticised the conduct of quiet diplomacy towards the regime. In a Commons motion, he said there should be a phased, effective approach to sanctions, linked to a timetable for a return to civilian rule. "The British government should for once lead the world and call for a comprehensive package of measures ... that will really hurt this brutal regime," he said.

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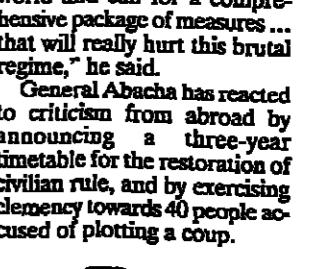
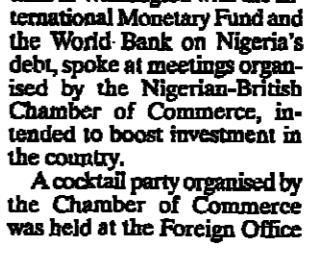
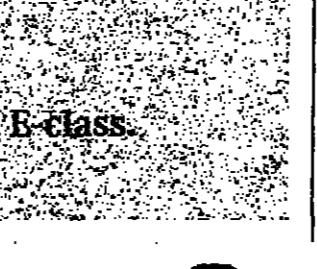
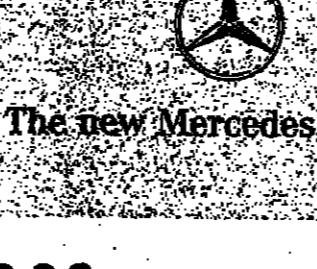
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# INDEPENDENT

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## The legacy of Fred West

It's not often that a civil servant makes someone's fortune. But author Geoffrey Wansell is probably going to become a very wealthy man, thanks to the efforts of the Official Solicitor, Peter Harris. Mr Harris has brokered the sale to publishers Hodder Headline of Frederick West's own jail autobiography and of 13 volumes of police transcripts of interviews with West, all for use in Mr Wansell's account of the West case. Whatever Mr Wansell's many talents, the presence of this material alone ensures that his book will be the clear leader in a packed post-trial field. He and his publishers must be feeling very pleased with themselves.

But should the rest of us share this warm glow? That certainly isn't our first reaction. In the middle of a trial that has been characterised by a constant flow of questions to witnesses about the sale of their stories to newspapers and others, this deal doesn't feel right. Did it have to happen now? And is it really the task of someone employed by the public to anoint authors with such remunerative blessings?

Mr Harris's office argues that he is just doing what the courts appointed him to do. As Official Solicitor, he represents (on our behalf) those who cannot represent themselves - particularly minors. The younger members of

the West family needed someone to act for them. In getting the best possible deal for their father's estate (which includes his papers and the transcripts), Mr Harris is fulfilling this "best friend" role.

Such explanations fail to reassure. In the first place the sale itself is suspect. We must not pre-judge the outcome of the Rosemary West trial, but can we really countenance the possibility that the murder of several young women and girls should eventually benefit the estate of their killer, while the victims' families may be left with nothing? If criminals are not allowed to benefit from their crimes, then logically neither should their families.

If the legal answer to the above question is yes, the family must inherit, then there is something wrong with the law. At any event it was surely a mistake for the sale to be pushed through while the evidence is still being heard in court. Quite apart from the unseemliness of hawking the West transcripts before any culpability is determined - thus bracketing together the dispensation of justice and the sale of stories - there was no need to hold the auction now. If the timing was aimed at maximising the returns, then those involved should be ashamed of themselves.

## A shameful lack of honour

Events over the past few days have provided powerful evidence that Michael Howard has indeed intervened regularly in the running of the prison service. Derek Lewis, during more than three years as Director-General of the Prison Service, was clearly fed up with such interference. That much is apparent from the writ against Mr Howard, which he issued yesterday. Mr Lewis portrays the Home Secretary breathing down his neck every day, obstructing staff appointments, interfering in industrial disputes with the prison officers' association, even pressuring him to suspend John Marriott, the former Governor of Parkhurst prison after three dangerous "lifers" escaped.

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Nevertheless, Mr Lewis's general case that his old boss is a busybody looks compelling. And who could blame Mr Howard for being so obsessive? He is the Home Secretary. We would be worried if he did not take a conscientious interest in those behind bars.

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Sir Patrick Mayhew may have disclosed the second way the requirement to give up weapons may be in jeopardy at his press conference in Belfast on Tuesday. He said, "a commission might find some other means by which the necessary confidence can be generated". I suspect that elements in the Irish and US governments

are planning that an international commission (without the word disarmament or decommissioning in the title) will be set in progress, that it will conduct some investigations and come back and report that it is satisfied with Sinn Fein's commitment to peace, and urge the commencement of talks on that basis. And then the British government will be pressurised into accepting such a report as a substitute for decommissioning. Sir Patrick's language may be walking him and us into the very trap that Dick Spring said a year ago would be intolerable.

Instead of allowing himself to be moved by these elements within the Irish and US governments, Sir Patrick should insist that the Irish government sticks to the Downing Street Declaration. It should remind the White House that it gave Sinn Fein permission at Easter to raise money in the US in the expectation that Sinn Fein would deliver on arms. Rather than tamely accepting Sinn Fein's reasoning on that understanding, the White House ought to be persuading it to accept realities.

Many years ago a Sinn Fein leader declared that the organisation would take power with an Armalite in one hand and a ballot paper in the other. What its members must accept is that no one will deal with them until they throw away the Armalite and trust exclusively to the ballot paper.

The writer is the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party.

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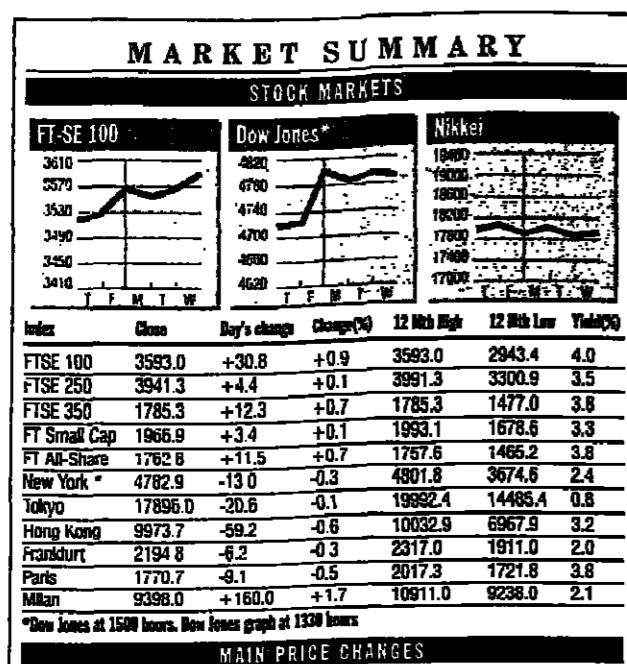
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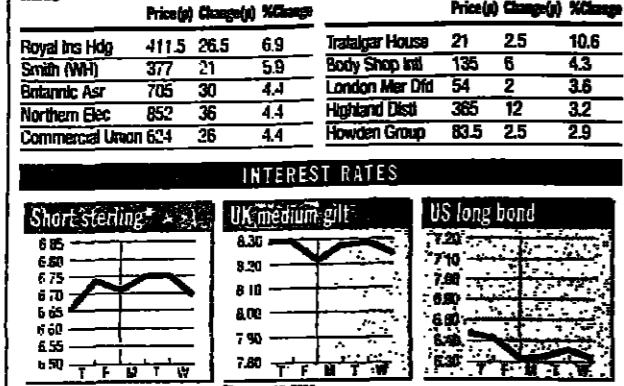
\*New Jones at 1500 hours. Dow Jones graph at 1300 hours

**MAIN PRICE CHANGES**

Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	12 Mth High	12 Mth Low	Today's
FTSE 100	3593.0	+30.8	+0.9	3593.0	2943.4	4.0
FTSE 250	3941.3	+4.4	+0.1	3951.3	3300.9	3.5
FTSE 350	1785.3	+12.3	+0.7	1785.3	1477.0	3.8
FT Small Cap	1865.9	+3.4	+0.1	1993.1	1678.6	3.3
FT All-Share	1762.8	+11.5	+0.7	1787.6	1465.2	3.8
New York	4702.9	-13.0	-0.3	4801.8	3674.6	2.4
Tokyo	17896.0	-20.6	-0.1	19824.4	14465.4	0.8
Hong Kong	973.2	-59.2	-0.6	10032.9	6967.9	3.2
Frankfurt	2194.8	-4.2	-0.3	2317.0	1911.0	2.0
Paris	1770.7	-8.1	-0.5	1721.8	1721.8	3.8
Milan	9388.0	+150.0	+1.7	10911.0	9238.0	2.1

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**INTEREST RATES**



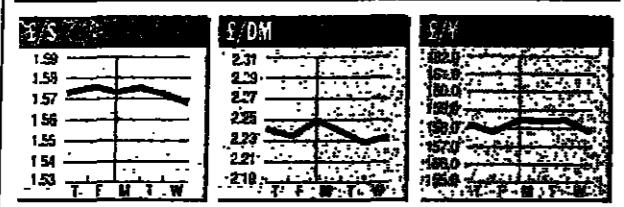
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**Money Market Rates**

Index	1 Month	1 Year	Median Bond (%)	Year Ago	Long Bond (%)	52-Week Ago
UK	6.66	6.88	8.14	8.65	8.31	8.42
US	5.75	5.78	5.95	7.63	6.29	7.86
Japan	0.25	0.50	2.05	4.65	3.56	5.03
Germany	4.06	4.06	6.54	7.33	7.18	7.75

\*\*New Jones at 1500 hours. Dow Jones graph at 1300 hours

**CURRENCIES**



\*\*New Jones at 1500 hours. Dow Jones graph at 1300 hours

**OTHER INDICATORS**

Period	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Latest	Yr Ago	Next Fig
2 (London)	1.5693	-0.49	1.6154	£/London	0.8372	+0.46	-
2 (NY)**	1.5685	-0.46	-	£/NY	0.8376	+0.19	-
DM (London)	2.2008	+0.32p	2.4235	DM (London)	1.42097	+0.42p	1.5002
DM (London)	157.87	-10.27	157.80	DM (London)	100.53	+10.16	97.69
DM (London)	84.2	unc	88.8	DM (London)	92.9	+0.2	93.3

\*\*New York rates and DMs December at 1500 hours

**IN BRIEF**

**Shares soar to new high**

Shares soared to a new all-time closing high on the stock market yesterday, powered by better-than-expected economic data and a renewed frenzy of takeover speculation. The FTSE 100 index ended 30.8 points up at a new closing peak of 3,593.0 by the end of trading.

A huge fall in the US deficit in August boosted the dollar, but there was also good economic news from this side of the Atlantic. Dealers drew comfort from sluggish UK retail sales data and no sign of any acceleration in underlying earnings, which are deemed likely to give the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, more room to cut base rates in the forthcoming Budget. The feeling was reinforced after the Confederation of British Industry's director-general, Adair Turner, said that the next movement in UK rates should be downward.

**Southgate to forgo CBI presidency**

Sir Colin Southgate is giving up the chance to be president of the Confederation of British Industry next year because of pressure of work at his company, Thorn EMI, which is damaging next spring amid rumours that Rupert Murdoch is interested in buying the music business. Sir Colin Marshall, chairman of British Airways, is to replace Sir Colin as deputy president of the CBI, a job that automatically leads on to the presidency next May.

**USAir back in the black**

USAir confirmed yesterday that it had made a modest profit in the third quarter just as it is entering into negotiations with two competitors, United and American Airlines, on a possible buyout. The carrier said it had earned \$43.1m (£27m), or 35 cents a share, in the quarter, compared with a loss of \$180.1m in the same period last year. It said it expected to stay in profit for the full year. The figures were its first quarterly profit in seven years. The results will be welcomed by British Airways, which has a 25 per cent stake in the carrier and has watched it suffer accumulating losses over the past three years.

**Tring warns on profits**

Tring International, the budget compact disc supplier, warned that its first-half profits would be materially below those in the same period last year. This was primarily due to continuing difficult trading conditions in the UK market. The company said profits would not be less than £1.4m and the interim dividend would be held at 1.4p. The shares fell 1.2p to 86p.

**£4bn drug company merger**

IVAX, the US group which claims to be the world's biggest generic drug company, and Hafslund of Norway are getting together in a \$6.5bn (£4bn) merger. The new entity, to be called IVAX Nycomed, will employ over 13,000 and have its headquarters in London, where it also hopes to have its primary stock market listing. Combined revenues would have been \$2.5bn in 1995.

**Grid sell-off details tomorrow**

Details of the £3bn demerger of the National Grid Company, owned mainly by the 12 regional electricity firms in England and Wales, are due to be announced tomorrow. The 12 have agreed to pay customers a £50 rebate following the flotation of the grid, which is expected to pay the companies a special dividend of £870m. Shares in the grid are likely to begin trading on 11 December.

**Singapore fall-out: Fraud investigators respond swiftly to allegations of a high-level bank cover-up**

# Barings staff face fresh inquiry

STEPHEN VINES  
Singapore  
and JOHN EISENHAMMER  
London

Leeson, but these would not be added to the 11 on which he will stand trial in Singapore should his extradition from Germany be successful.

The existing charges fall into three categories of forgery, "certain price adjustments" and deceiving the Singapore International Monetary Exchange. These offences carry a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment. Asked whether the Singaporean authorities would accept an offer of co-operation from Mr Leeson, Mr Ang replied: "Yes, why not?" He was hesitant in saying whether such an offer had already been made but ultimately said that it had not.

Stephen Pollard, Mr Leeson's lawyer, said his client is likely to get a fairer trial in Singapore in the light of the new report. "The inspectors have focused on the extent to which the bank could not have collapsed without the acts and omissions of the London management. To that extent they must share the responsibility with Nick Leeson for the collapse of the bank."

Mr Ang would say nothing specific about his department's interest in Mr Norris - but he made clear that if people outside Singapore were responsible, there would be no hesitation in investigating them. "If offences were committed here, then it matters not where these people are. Obviously we can pursue them in accordance with extradition law."

Asked whether Mr Norris could be prosecuted if it were proved that he was involved in a conspiracy to conceal unlawful trading, as suggested by the inspectors, Mr Ang replied: "If it can be established that acts of conspiracy took place in Singapore, [the department] may be able to use that as a basis to launch investigations".



On the trail: Laurence Ang, head of Singapore's Commercial Affairs Department, announcing a new criminal investigation into the Barings collapse after a Finance Ministry report revealed new evidence. Photograph: Tan Ah Soon/AP

Peter Norris's lawyer in London said yesterday his client would fight any attempt to have him extradited to Singapore. "I imagine that ... he would not be enthusiastic about returning voluntarily to face a court in Singapore," said Anthony Isaacs of Stephenson Harwood.

The Inspector's report suggests that Barings Futures (Singapore), the company at the centre of the collapse, was trading unlawfully. If this were proved all the company's directors would be liable for criminal prosecution under the Singapore Companies Act. Mr Norris, Mr Bax, Mr Jones and the Singaporean directors are therefore at risk. Nothing has been said so far about possible action against Singaporean nationals.

Mr Ang added that attempts to interview "seven to ten people" in the UK came to nothing because of the "virtually impossible" demands made by potential witnesses.

He said these were: that interviews had to be informal, that lawyers had to be present, that detailed questions had to be provided in advance, that questions could not go beyond the scope of those notified.

the scope of those notified, that any document referred to was to be supplied in advance, that the Commercial Affairs Department would not seek to summon or subpoena the witnesses and that the interviews were to be held under the privilege provisions of English law, in other words that their contents could not be used in any subsequent legal action.

## Wells Fargo bids £6.4bn for rival

JOHN WILLCOCK  
Financial Correspondent

Wells Fargo, the American bank, has launched a hostile \$10.1bn (£6.4bn) bid for First Interstate Bancorp, a deal that would break previous US records and create the country's seventh-largest bank.

The announcement shocked Wall Street and adds to the merger mania already rampant in American retail banking, where size is seen as vital for survival.

Wells Fargo expects to make cost savings of \$700m a year by

closing down overlapping operations, echoing claims by Lloyds Bank in Britain that it would save £350m a year from its own proposed merger with TSB. First Interstate has given the bid a cool response.

American banks are facing intense competition not only from banks at home and abroad but also from industrial giants such as General Motors and AT&T, which have huge credit card businesses, and from brokerage houses that offer bank-like cheque and other services.

Wells Fargo expects to make cost savings of \$700m a year by

merger, but Wells' lucrative offer puts pressure on the Los Angeles-based First Interstate to succumb, in a move described by analysts as "a bear hug".

San Francisco-based Wells Fargo, the nation's 17th-largest bank, has proposed to exchange five-eighths of a share for each share of First Interstate, representing a price of \$135.50 a share, 26 per cent higher than First Interstate's closing share price on Tuesday.

The combined bank would have \$107bn in assets and nearly 2,000 offices, before branch closures.

News of the hostile bid sent US bank shares soaring. First Interstate's shares shot up 28.8 per cent to \$136.50 yesterday afternoon on the New York Stock Exchange. Wells' shares jumped 5.7 per cent to \$225.75.

"The economic benefit of the proposed merger is significant for shareholders of both companies," said Paul Hazen, chairman and chief executive of Wells.

William Siar, chairman of First Interstate, said: "I am deeply disappointed that Wells Fargo would take this unwarranted action."

Wells Fargo plans to spend \$2m on an advertising campaign in the US in an attempt to raise consumer awareness of the brand, which is under pressure from rival chains. The campaign will focus on New York, Washington, Chicago and Los Angeles, and will not go national unless it produces an improved performance in the stores. "The

US is a difficult market and it is necessary to raise the profile of the Body Shop name," the company said.

The US has proved a hard slog but it is now the company's largest market with 262 stores. It opened a further 27 in the last six months with a further 13 openings planned by the end of the year. US sales were 16 per cent higher at \$44m but like-for-like sales fell 8 per cent. The company said



## COMMENT

Those who claim the creation of a flexible labour market is capable of producing sustained low-inflationary growth have yet to prove their case"

## Echoes of 1987 appear in the labour market

After the shock of the rise in retail price inflation to 3.9 per cent last week, the latest sales figures were eagerly awaited for evidence of how consumers might be responding to the attempt by retailers to rebuild margins. Fierce competition in the high street has been a key reason why intense cost pressures in manufacturing have not translated into a big hike in retail price inflation.

On the face of it, flat retail sales in September - representing the first annual fall since 1992 - are as clear a response from consumers as the Treasury, for one, might have hoped. You can push prices up, but don't expect us to buy, seems to be the message from consumers. Well, maybe. With both the inflation and sales figures clearly affected by a long, hot summer, it would be premature to conclude that consumers will necessarily have the last word in this tug of war with retailers. For that, we really will need to see more evidence.

In the longer term, the inflationary outlook hinges on the behaviour of the labour market. If there was general surprise in the City at the weakness of retail sales, there was just as much astonishment at the apparent buoyancy of the labour market. The decline in claimant unemployment, which was petering out in the first half of the year, appears to have resumed.

The unemployment count may be somewhat flattered by the effects of the academic year, as new graduates take up jobs or return to higher education. On the other

hand, the new rules associated with the switch to incapacity benefit are estimated to be leading to a modest increase in claimant unemployment. The clearest evidence that the labour market is more active than had been thought came from the Labour Force Survey, which showed the biggest increase in a three month period of employment since it started to recover in 1993.

So far, however, renewed buoyancy in the labour market is not leading to a pick-up in underlying earnings. These grew by 3.25 per cent in August, the same as in July and down on June. Provided this remains the case, we can relax about the prospects for inflation.

This is a big proviso. Goldman Sachs has warned that on a wide range of measures - such as the ratio of vacancies to short-term unemployment - the labour market is showing characteristics last seen in early 1987. This was just before wage inflation began to pick up in earnest. Headline inflation may fall next month because of the cut in mortgage rates, but those who claim the creation of a flexible labour market is capable of producing sustained low inflationary growth have yet to prove their case.

### Another teaser on competition policy

The Department of Trade and Industry is teasing us again over competition policy, and very irritating it is after all the Gov-

ernment's broken promises on reform over the last six years. Jonathan Evans, the Corporate Affairs Minister, has written to Richard Caborn, chairman of the Commons trade and industry committee, suggesting an important change in the way competition is policed. The DTI, he says, is drawing up proposals to make the Office of Fair Trading become more like a single competition authority which both investigates problems and implements the remedies.

The role of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission would then be to give an independent judgement where cases are contested. According to Mr Evans, "this may require some rebalancing of the roles of the OFT and MMC, giving the latter a primarily adjudicating role." This is a significant shift, at a time when the Government is fighting off suggestions from Mr Caborn's committee, from Labour and from Sir Bryan Carsberg, the former director general of the OFT, that there should be a single competition authority.

Mr Evans opposes any radical reform like that. But his letter gives a lot of ground to critics of the present system. The more important issue, however, is whether the competition authorities - whatever form they take - should be given more power to act directly against abuses. In the UK, the emphasis is on lengthy investigation followed eventually by action, usually in the form of a ban against repeat offences. The prohibition system common on the Continent tends to ban anti-competitive practices first and

then argue about them in court afterwards.

There is a consensus that more prohibition is needed in the UK, a consensus which Mr Evans seems to go along with at least to some extent. It is when it comes to the detail, that the practice seems to fall short of the rhetoric. Mr Evans does indeed envisage an OFT with strengthened powers of investigation, the ability to demand undertakings from companies as an alternative to MMC investigations, and powers to make interim relief orders banning undesirable activities.

But other important changes to strengthen the OFT, which the Government, the Opposition and Sir Bryan all agree are desirable, have been promised by DTI ministers in announcements in 1989 and 1993 and there is still no sign of them appearing in a Queen's Speech. Mr Evans may well believe what he says about strengthening the OFT, but does his boss, Ian Lang?

### Testing times ahead for Body Shop

Has The Body Shop passed its sell-by date, as the collapse in half-year profits and steadily declining share price would indicate, or is this just a temporary aberration? In time-honoured fashion, Gordon Roddick, chairman, describes what is plainly proving a difficult year as one of "consolidation". That is usually code for worse to come. For the time being, however, Mr Roddick continues to in-

sist there will be little overall change in profits for the year. With like-for-like sales more or less static, losses in the US mounting, and costs spiralling, it is hard to see how this can be the case, but who knows, he could be right.

The big question, however, is not so much where short-term profits are heading as whether Body Shop's retail concept - revolutionary enough in its time - has outgrown its shelf life. Body Shop clearly believes not, for it is continuing to expand at breakneck speed. Some 90 new stores were opened in the half-year, taking the total to 1,300 worldwide. For the time being the expansion has stopped generating profits growth, but it is only a matter of time before that picks up again too, Body Shop insists. We'll see.

The test will be at Christmas. This all-important trading season is not going to be an easy one for Body Shop. Its green credentials have been challenged, and, however unfairly, some of the mud has inevitably stuck. Meanwhile, other more traditional retailers of toiletry and skin-care products have made great strides in introducing their own environmental and animal-friendly lines. Body Shop no longer has the free ride it once did.

As a small niche player on the high street and in the shopping malls, there was always going to be a good place for Body Shop. More questionable is whether the company's limited product range and brand name can sustain the international retail organisation that Body Shop aspires to be.

Former high-street salesman reaps handsome reward for his one-man furniture venture

## Kirkham to raise £60m in share sale

TOM STEVENSON  
Deputy City Editor

Graham Kirkham, the son of a Yorkshire miner who left school at 16 with no O levels, is to raise £60m by selling one-third of his 52 per cent stake in DFS Furniture, the three-piece suite retailer he founded 26 years ago.

Mr Kirkham said the share sale came in response to repeated phone calls from institutions anxious to buy shares in what is a very tight market. Ever jockey, he admitted, that his motives were not completely altruistic - he wouldn't be sorry to accept the money.

The proceeds of the share sale will bolster the £130m he took away from DFS's 1993 flotation, when he sold 48 per cent of the family-owned business. Even after the disposal, Mr Kirkham will retain a stake of about 35 per cent in the furniture retailer, worth more than £100m at yesterday's closing price of 345p.

News of the share sale accompanied strong full-year profit figures for the 12 months to July and a special 10p dividend to shareholders to reduce the company's fast growing cash pile. Pre-tax profits jumped 23

per cent to £26.23m despite flagging consumer demand and a moribund housing market, normally a prerequisite for growing sales of household goods.

Even before the special payout, the underlying dividend growth was a healthy 15 per cent from 7.2p a share to 8.3p.

A keen collector, Mr Kirkham agreed the art market would welcome his decision to release another slice of his considerable wealth. He remains resolutely unimpressed by money, keeping a substantial art and antiques collection in a beautiful Georgian mansion, Canteley Hall, where he occasionally entertains, but chooses to live in an unassuming four-bedroom modern house a few miles away.

Mr Kirkham remained tight-lipped about his plans for the £60m, but he dismissed suggestions that he would dilute his interest in DFS by sinking the money into yachts or football clubs - "DFS is not a job, it's a way of life" - and laughed off suggestions that he would repeat a recent multi-million pound loan to the Tory party.

Six new openings are planned both this year and next and a target of 100 shops compares with 52 now. Despite the growth



Sitting on a fortune: Graham Kirkham, who is to raise £60m by selling one-third of his stake in the cash-rich furniture group he launched in 1969. Photograph: Michael Steele

opening just one new outlet at the end of the financial period, DFS also announced an ambitious expansion programme and a move out of its Midlands and Northern heartland into southern England.

Mr Kirkham's proposed share sale is the latest reward for the former salesman at Hardys, a high-street furniture chain that became part of Harris

Queensway. Impatient with working for someone else, he struck out in 1969 and set up DFS. The model of vertical integration, DFS made its own furniture upstairs, bringing it down to the showroom. Mr Kirkham was delivery man, salesman and accountant; he even cut the material.

Investment column, page 24

## Kevin tells of father's share price 'vanity'

JOHN WILLCOCK  
Financial Correspondent

Robert Maxwell regarded the share price of his business empire as a measure of his personal popularity, "part of his vanity", and ploughed millions of pounds into supporting the price, his youngest son Kevin said yesterday.

The late tycoon came to believe that the share price of Maxwell Communication Corporation (MCC) was being driven down in 1991 by a bear raid, an organised group of speculators.

On his third day of giving evidence Kevin Maxwell told the court his view of the collapse of the Maxwell business empire in 1991.

Questioned by his counsel Alun Jones QC, Kevin said that his father spent millions during 1991 trying to support the MCC share price, but failed for two reasons: the London Stock Exchange was lenient in making the speculators pay for the stock; and the investment bank Goldman Sachs was in effect as collateral for Maxwell loans.

Asked about his father's attitude to MCC's share price, Kevin said: "There is no question that the share price of his publicly quoted companies was a matter of pride ... a part of his vanity ... if the share price was rising he felt better."

"He felt the share price reflected in part public esteem for his business. So it was the first thing he looked for in the morning and the last thing at night. It was a personal fixation."

To counteract this he consulted with his main adviser,

### The Maxwell Trial



Day 50

Goldman Sachs' Eric Sheinberg, to buy MCC shares through offshore entities. But the price did not improve much.

Kevin said he had seen statements made to the Serious Fraud Office by Mr Sheinberg and told the court that the prosecution "haven't called Eric Sheinberg and they should".

Earlier Kevin had described to the court his father's interest in Israel, which he said had not really started until the late 1980s, although his father had always been interested in and supported the state of Israel.

Robert Maxwell's interest in Israel "was stimulated by what can be described as a return to his roots". His son said he had survived the Holocaust but most of his family, who were Jewish, had perished.

Kevin said he had grown up not realising his father had any relatives but extensive research by his mother had uncovered some 200 relatives in different parts of the world.

Robert Maxwell had financed the massive airlift of Jewish children from Chernobyl after the 1986 nuclear disaster and assisted with their resettlement in Israel.

His substantial investments in the Israeli companies Scitec

and Teva were seen in Israel as showing confidence in the country at a time when Israel was seen as risky.

Kevin, his brother Ian and the former Maxwell adviser Larry Trachtenberg deny conspiracy to defraud the pension funds by misusing £22m worth of shares in Teva as security for a loan in a bid to prop up the crumbling Maxwell empire in the days following its founder's death.

Kevin alone denies a similar charge of conspiring with his late father to misuse £100m of Scitec shares to pay private Maxwell company debts. In both cases the prosecution claims the shares were not theirs to use but belonged to the pension fund.

Kevin has told the court that he believed what his father had told him - that the shares had been transferred from the pension fund to the Robert Maxwell Group - and that he acted legally.

Kevin told the jury that, with the benefit of reflection, the death of his father and the loss of his famed negotiating skills was decisive. He admitted: "I did not have his stature, his reputation. I did not have 40 years of business experience when facing the NatWest and the group's other bankers."

Questioned by his counsel about the origins of the group's failure and the degree of responsibility he felt, Kevin replied: "I feel that I share a significant responsibility for the collapse of the business."

He went on to list causes, including disastrous losses of over £300m in share values in the 1987 world stock market crash.

The trial continues today.

## Unemployment falls but recovery evades the high street

PAUL WALLACE  
Economics Editor

Unemployment fell in September by more than in any month this year, but there was no sign of recovery in the high street, with retail sales slip to lower level than a year ago.

The decline of 27,000 in the claimant total was much larger than the markets had expected. Spread across all regions, the fall in unemployment brought the jobless count down to 2,265,000.

The marked trend since the start of the year of progressively smaller monthly declines in unemployment now appears to be reversing itself. According to the

Central Statistical Office, the month's decline in unemployment is currently running at between 10,000 and 15,000.

However, flat retail sales in September also came as a surprise to the markets, which had been expecting a rise of more than half a per cent on August.

Thus in turn meant retail sales were half a per cent down on their level in September 1994, the first time they have fallen at an annual rate since 1992.

Supermarkets, which pushed up prices aggressively last

month, saw a decline in sales of 1.3 per cent compared with August. However, textile, clothing and footwear stores, which also increased prices, saw a rise in sales of 1.6 per cent.

The effects of a hot summer make it difficult to work out what the implications of the figures are for retail price inflation.

"The real test will come in October and November," said Ian Shepherdson, economist at HSBC Markets, "as retailers and consumers play out their familiar cat-and-mouse game."

"Something has to give," said

Geoffrey Dicks, UK economist at NatWest Markets. With underlying earnings still rising at only 3.25 per cent in August, consumers were feeling the pinch. Now that retailers were more determined to pass on higher costs, the effect was being felt in declining sales.

Underlying earnings remained particularly modest in the service sector where the rate of increase remains at 2.5 per cent. This was despite further indications that the labour market was more buoyant than had been thought. Vacancies at

Jobcentres - which account for about a third of all vacancies in the economy - rose in September by 10,000, to 193,000, their highest level for more than five years. Another positive reading of the labour market came from the quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS), which is based on a sample of 60,000 households. This showed that unemployment, measured according to international conventions, fell by 18,000 in the summer (June to August) compared with the spring (March to May). In the spring it had risen

by 28,000. According to the LFS, employment rose by 107,000 during the summer, by most of the new jobs going to women who rejoined the workforce. This was the biggest increase in employment since it began to rise again in mid-1993.

Manufacturing employment fell in the second quarter by 4,000. Further pressure on jobs in the sector may come from the fact that unit labour costs rose by 3.6 per cent in the three months ending August. Productivity rose by only 1 per cent, its lowest since June 1991.

tal increase in employment since spring 1993.

The most likely explanation of the drop in unemployment" said Geoffrey Dicks, UK economist at NatWest Markets, "is that jobs are being created in the services sector where the low rate of wage increase is pricing people into jobs."

Manufacturing employment fell in the second quarter by 4,000. Further pressure on jobs in the sector may come from the fact that unit labour costs rose by 3.6 per cent in the three months ending August. Productivity rose by only 1 per cent, its lowest since June 1991.

Comment, above

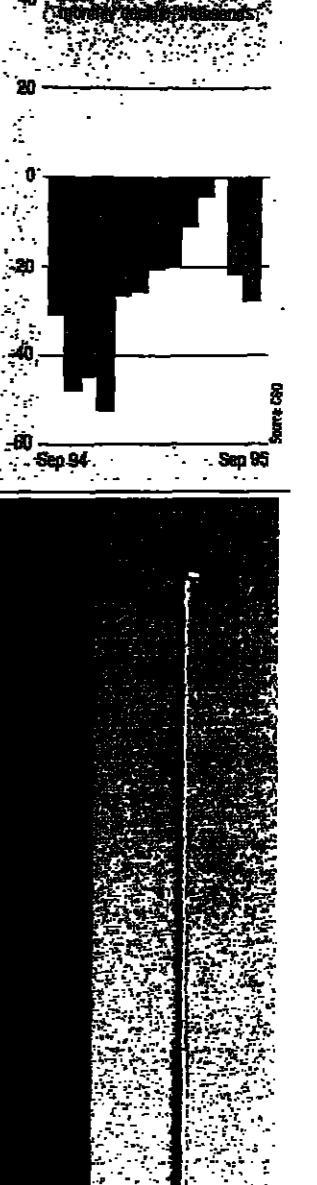


## The last thing people pick up before going shopping.

Housewives are far more likely to take notice of information from the radio than any other medium, before going shopping. In fact, Commercial Radio has a larger audience even than Commercial TV, right up until 4pm.

Commercial Radio. Its time has come.

SOURCE: RADAR IN PEOPLE'S LIVES, RAYBON 1994/95



## DFS maintains unbroken record with £26m profit

One of the biggest problems of DFS Furniture is finding anyone who has not fallen under the spell of Graham Kirkham, its charming chairman. If, like him, you have taken £180m out of your company in two years and still hold a stake worth more than £100m you can probably afford to be extremely nice, but his attention to putting people at their ease is crucial to the success of the company. In a commodity business like selling three-piece suites, making the customer feel king is a crucial differentiation.

The success of DFS's approach was confirmed yesterday when the company announced its 26th successive year of growth, increased its full year payout by 15 per cent and rewarded shareholders with a special dividend worth 10p a share.

Pre-tax profits jumped 23 per cent in the 12 months to July from £22.73m to £26.23m, although that was slightly flattered by the inclusion last year of the costs of coming to the market.

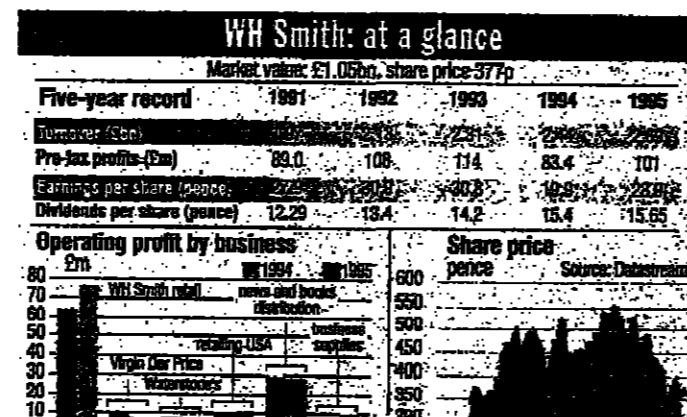
Stripping that out, underlying prof-

its rose 15.4 per cent, with earnings per share 15.1 per cent ahead at 16.57p. The dividend is increased from 7.2p to 8.3p.

Cynics might question how a company can do so well selling furniture in the face of fragile consumer spending, still undermined by the moribund housing market. But it is hard to argue with underlying sales growth of 8 per cent and such strong cash flow that even after adding new outlets at a rate of six a year there is money left over to hand back to shareholders.

DFS reckons that, with a market share of only 8 per cent, it can continue to grow at the current rate for the next decade at least. From its current base of 32 shops, it is aiming for a chain of at least 100 strong. If it can translate its success in the Midlands and North to the South and South West of England, where it presently has no exposure at all, DFS will become a dominant force in household retailing.

Brokers are pencilling in prof-



its for the year to next July of £30m, implying earnings per share of 19p and a prospective price/earnings ratio of 18, with the shares down 8p at 34.5p yesterday. In the short run that appears pretty demanding, but if the growth projections are half achievable this is a share to tuck away and forget about.

### Upturn hopes at WH Smith

Is sentiment at last turning in favour of WH Smith? The shares have underperformed the rest of the stock market by 35 per cent since the beginning of a very difficult year, but

yesterday saw them bounce 22p to 57.5p as apparent signs of a sales recovery emerged from the annual meeting.

The company said sales in the UK retail business were an "encouraging" 7.4 per cent ahead in the first quarter to 2 September. But the WH Smith retail chain, which was at the root of May's profit warning, is clearly not out of the woods yet.

The headline growth rate of 2.8 per cent at Smith looked reasonable, given that economic malaise and hot weather kept consumers out of the shops over the three summer months. However, increased spending on advertising, promotion and improved store layouts – has only barely reversed last year's 1.3 per cent underlying fall in sales, turning it into a rather anaemic 1.4 per cent like-for-like increase in the first quarter.

Smith warned yesterday that further rationalisation will shave £20m from first half profits, leaving them "materially lower". Brokers are now looking for full year profits of

below £96m, putting the shares on a prospective multiple of 17. Smith still needs to put its long-sought after new chief executive in place to fully reverse the negative sentiment. Until then, the shares are high enough.

### Bluebird sets up Disney link

Bluebird Toys has enjoyed meteoric growth on the back of its miniature characters, ranging from Mighty Max to Poly Pocket. But after a stunning rise in 1993, the shares marked time last year as the stock market latched on to the risks in this branch of the toys market.

That all changed yesterday following news that Bluebird had signed a deal with Mattel, its main distributor, and Walt Disney to market a new range of miniature characters based on Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and their extensive relations. No figures were placed on

the launch next year will do nothing for 1995 profits, which if they hit £18m would put the shares on a prospective p/e of 15. But analysts expect Disney could add at least £1.5m to next year's bottom line, taking it to £24m and reducing the multiple to 11. That still looks reasonable value, particularly given that Mattel trades on around 20.

## Harris unrolls carpet format

NIGEL COPE

Carpetright, the rapidly expanding carpet retailer run by former Harris Queensway chief, Sir Phil Harris, is to roll out a new format in a bid to capture 20 per cent of the UK market.

The new, larger style stores are called Carpet Depot. They feature a wider range of stock and include a more upmarket range costing up to £50 a square metre and will offer interest-free credit whereas Carpetright's other stores do most of their business in cash, cheque and credit card.

The first branch opened in West Thurrock in Essex last month. A fourth opens near Edinburgh next week and the company plans a rapid expansion to a chain of 70 outlets over the next four years.

Sir Phil said: "It will meet the department stores like John Lewis head-on. It will be a low-

margin, high-volume business. It's very exciting."

However, there are concerns that the new larger stores might cannibalise the existing Carpetright outlets. Kingfisher has already found that its new Warehouse DIY stores have hit the existing branches of B&Q. Sean Eddie, retail analyst at NatWest Securities, said: "If you put in a category killer you are clearly going to take market share. But if you are already the biggest then you are more likely to feel a disproportionate amount of pain." However Sir Phil is confident that the new stores are aiming at a different market to Carpetright.

After its flotation two years ago Carpetright has expanded to a chain of more than 200 stores. In June it reported a 40 per cent increase in profits to £20m for the year to April. The shares closed 4p lower yesterday at 34.2p.

### COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Berry Birch & Miles (1)	3.34m (4.05m)	-0.05m (0.38m)	1.29 (4.49)	n/a (1.08)
BDA Holdings (1)	0.36m (0.71m)	-0.07m (-0.55m)	-0.36p (-3.01p)	n/a (n/a)
Blockley (1)	5.28m (5.24m)	-1.21m (0.11m)	-0.58p (0.32p)	n/a (0.49)
Body Shop International (1)	105m (93.5m)	9.1m (12.3m)	2.09 (4.29)	1.09p (0.89p)
Bridgestone (7)	21.4m (27.1m)	1.34m (0.74m)	6.64p (5.10p)	3.0p (3p)
DFS Furniture Co (7)	145m (135m)	25.3m (21.4m)	16.57p (14.38p)	8.3p (7.2p)
Exwest (9)	7.99m (5.8m)	1.49m (1.13m)	4.34p (5.21p)	1.1p (1p)
Handels Europa (1)	22.0m (15.7m)	2.04m (1.56m)	5.3p (5.2p)	1.2p (1p)
Town Centre Stores (7)	22.0m (20.0m)	9.3m (8.8m)	6.38p (5.40p)	3.25p (3.04p)
WMS Group (7)	151.1m (148.0m)	16.2m (12.8m)	10.2p (8.7p)	2.657p (2.415p)

(1) - Quarterly (7) - Final (6) - Interim

## Graduate

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# business

## Another shock to the US system

The train journey up the north-eastern coast of the United States is a real eye-opener. As the Amtrak train numbers past Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Boston, only a few patches of countryside, gloriously lit by autumn foliage, relieve the apocalyptic landscape of deserted factories, boarded-up stores and rusting heaps of cars.

The types of people who travel by train rather than air shuttle are, on the whole, those who already know only too well about the decline of America's traditional industries. The acres of dereliction running alongside the tracks are a graphic illustration of it.

Yet the indications are that the US economy as a whole is in very good shape. America is now a low-inflation country; the average rate of consumer price inflation has been well below 4 per cent for a decade. Economic expansion has slowed but growth is expected to recover to near its trend rate.

The part that has lately been doing well enough to compensate for the decline of industries that no recovery can reach is the service sector. During the second quarter, when gross domestic product growth dipped to an annual rate of 1.3 per cent, service output was up 3.8 per cent, industrial output only 0.5 per cent.

The number of jobs in industry fell in the second and third quarters - by 18,000 in September alone. But the number employed in the service sector slowed only modestly, and private sector services added 169,000 jobs last month.

This is not a new trend. Service sector employment has grown faster than industrial employment for most of the past 10 years.

Service industries are thriving in places far from the east coast. For instance, California



### ECONOMIC VIEW

DIANE COYLE

and the west coast have been boosted by the entertainment and communications industries. Georgia by the growth of financial services. Florida by catering to its booming population of wealthy pensioners.

The continuing switch from manufacturing to services is only one part of the explanation for America's strong economic performance. For there is no question that some areas of US manufacturing have been tempered in the forge of recession and international competition

### Health care and public services will face a nasty shake-up

into world-class, ultra-competitive industries. Thanks to cost cutting and lay-offs, economy-wide productivity growth has been a spectacular 2 per cent a year since mid-1990, and in manufacturing about 3 per cent a year.

Higher growth of manufacturing output is going to be the key to a short-term pick-up in the economy, just as it was the explanation for the recent slowdown. Although it accounts for less than a fifth of the economy, the swings in manufacturing drive the economic cycle.

The latest statistics are not all that encouraging. Apart from the declines in manufacturing employment, the index of manufacturing activity produced by the National Association of

Purchasing Managers has been below 50 - pointing to a fall in activity - in four out of the past five months. On all but one occasion in the last six years a run like this has heralded a recession. (The exception was 1985, a year of very expansionist monetary policy.)

However, no matter what happens in the short-run - and the bond market will react sharply if the economy diverges in either direction from its "soft landing" ideal of steady 2-2.5 per cent growth - America's long-run growth trend depends on services.

There are opposing forces acting on service industries, which make it extremely difficult to predict how strong their performance will be. Services have traditionally displayed very sluggish growth in productivity - partly just because of difficulties in measuring it but partly because technological progress has not, so far, worked its magic on services. This could be about to change.

There is strong anecdotal evidence that computers are starting to boost productivity in a range of service industries. This is obvious in areas such as communications and entertainment but it also applies to distribution and retailing, for instance.

What's more, this recovery has seen a huge surge in investment in computers. Investment in information processing equipment has grown at an annual rate of about 20 per cent since early 1993. The US now has 63 computers for every 100 workers, a ratio nearly four times as high as in Japan.

This devolution will therefore enforce spending reductions,

which will result in some combination of reduced services and improved efficiency.

Unfortunately there are a lot of other services whose prospects are not nearly so dynamic. These include the bloated and inefficient health-care sector and the less bloated but even more inefficient public services, the obstructiveness of whose employees helps explain why so many Americans think their government is out to get them.

These sectors will face an unpleasant shake-up during the next few years. The outcome of the game of budget poker being played between the Clinton administration and Congress will be big cuts in Federal government spending.

A recent analysis by Darwin Beck, an economist at the broker Credit Suisse First Boston in New York, makes it clear that both sides agree that welfare and medical spending will bear the brunt of cuts during the next seven years. The wrangling in Washington is about precisely how much and how it is done.

The Federal government, under the deficit reduction plans, will devolve responsibility for some welfare programmes, Medicare (for the elderly) and Medicaid (for the poor). State governments are not permitted to run a deficit on their current spending.

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## unit trusts/data

## FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

Country	Sterling	DOLLAR			D-Marks
		1 month	3 months	1 month	
US	1.6980	12-10	34-81	1.0000	-
Canada	2.0090	10-2	22-10	1.3558	15-50
Germany	2.2292	30-44	151-141	1.4200	65-62
France	2.2382	24-32	151-141	1.4000	1.0000
UK	2.2500	24-32	151-141	1.3900	1.0000
UK State Chg Eq	2.2617	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Eq	2.2627	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb	2.2637	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 100	2.2647	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 200	2.2657	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 300	2.2667	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 400	2.2677	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 500	2.2687	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 600	2.2697	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 700	2.2707	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 800	2.2717	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 900	2.2727	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 1000	2.2737	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 1200	2.2747	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 1400	2.2757	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 1600	2.2767	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 1800	2.2777	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 2000	2.2787	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 2200	2.2797	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 2400	2.2807	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 2600	2.2817	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 2800	2.2827	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 3000	2.2837	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 3200	2.2847	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 3400	2.2857	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 3600	2.2867	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 3800	2.2877	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 4000	2.2887	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 4200	2.2897	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 4400	2.2907	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 4600	2.2917	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 4800	2.2927	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 5000	2.2937	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 5200	2.2947	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 5400	2.2957	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 5600	2.2967	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 5800	2.2977	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 6000	2.2987	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 6200	2.2997	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 6400	2.3007	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
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UK Gilt Cb 6800	2.3027	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 7000	2.3037	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
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UK Gilt Cb 10800	2.3227	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
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UK Gilt Cb 14000	2.3387	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 14200	2.3397	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 14400	2.3407	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 14600	2.3417	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 14800	2.3427	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 15000	2.3437	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
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UK Gilt Cb 15400	2.3457	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 15600	2.3467	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 15800	2.3477	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 16000	2.3487	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 16200	2.3497	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 16400	2.3507	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 16600	2.3517	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 16800	2.3527	24-32	151-141	1.3800	1.0000
UK Gilt Cb 17000	2.3537	24-32	151-141</		

## sport



The people's champion: Billy Ellison puts Red Rum through his paces on Southport sands, and Tommy Stack celebrates the horse's third Grand National triumph in 1977



Photographs: Keystone/Hulton Deutsch

## The warrior who became a national treasure

Red Rum, the most celebrated jumping horse of them all, died yesterday, aged 30. In keeping with the great romance of his career and life, the horse was immediately buried at the Aintree venue he dominated for so long. When the sun shines over the winning post at the Grand National next April, the shadow should fall on the old warrior's grave.

It was Red Rum's greatest skill that he deserved his best for the race that the British public reserve as their favourite. A record of three victories, as well as two seconds, in the Grand National, delivered him a place in the common lexicon.

As a young horse Red Rum was united with one of the few personalities who could match him, Lester Piggott. "I'm very sorry to hear of his death," the recently retired jockey said. "He was a racing institution and stayed in our yard on more than one occasion when he

was down to open betting shops in the area. It's a very, very sad loss."

Red Rum it was who showed that retired racehorses did not have to shiver their lives away in the corner of a field. His exploits on the racecourse earned him almost £115,000 in first-place prize money, but he is generally thought to have added a zero to that figure with his public appearances.

Yet Red Rum should not really have jumped a fence at all. He was bred at the Rossenara Stud in Co Kilkenny to be a Flat horse as he

was by the sprinter Quorum (stallion fee £198) out of a mare called Mared, who cost 240 guineas at the sales. England had yet to win the World Cup. Red Rum himself was, as a yearling, sent to Goffs Sales in Ireland, where he slipped to the ground. Few people were ever to see the horse fall again.

The gelding's early career on the Flat and then over jumps was char-

acterised more by the quantity than quality of his performances. The defining moment of his life came when he was sent to the August Doncaster Sales of 1972 and was purchased for 6,000 guineas by Donald "Ginger" McCain. The trainer bought the horse for an old owner, Noel Le Mare, a Lancashire construction engineer whose boyhood ambitions were to become a millionaire, marry a beautiful woman and win the Grand National. By the time Red Rum came into his keeping, when he was 84, he was happy he had

achieved the first two objectives. Mared, who cost 240 guineas at the sales, England had yet to win the World Cup. Red Rum himself was, as a yearling, sent to Goffs Sales in Ireland, where he slipped to the ground. Few people were ever to see the horse fall again.

The gelding's early career on the Flat and then over jumps was char-

**Richard Edmondson**  
on the death of Red Rum, the horse who made magic at Aintree

the problem, but it was generally recognised that it was cured by the gelding's regular walks in the up-to-then unheralded spa waters of the Irish Sea.

The following spring Red Rum went to Aintree for the first time as one of the most improved horses in training. Oddly, considering the adulation that was to follow, he was something of an anti-hero that day as he swept past the bold, front-running but exhausted Crisp just yards from the line in a course record time.

In 1974 Red Rum was topweight and the third favourite and won again before going on to success in

1975, 1976 and 1977.

### Five years that shook the racing world

1973 Grand National	1974	1975	1976	1977
1 RED RUM 9-1 4-6	1 RED RUM 12-1	1 ESCARGOT 13-2	1 HAG TRADE 14-1	1 RED RUM 9-1
2 Crisp 9-4 1-1	2 Escargot 17-2	2 Red Rum 7-2 1-1	2 Escargot 10-1	2 Crisp 10-1
3 L'Escargot 11-1	3 Charles Dickens 20-1	3 Spanish Steps 20-1	3 Escargot 28-1	3 Spanish 23-1
4 Spanish Steps 16-1	4 Spanish Steps 15-1	4 Money Market 14-1	4 Money Market 7-1	4 The Phoenix 20-1

pointment this year, but he did make one final appearance at Aintree on 3 May, the actual date of his 30th birthday.

Red Rum was moved from the Southport base of glory to new premises at Cholmondeley, in Cheshire, five years ago and when staff arrived at his box yesterday morning they knew there would be no more parades, no more day-breaks for the old horse. He was found to be in a distressed state and the decision to have him humanely destroyed was quickly taken.

That was to be Red Rum's last victory, however. The following season, as a 13-year-old, he was made hot favourite for the National but injured a heel eight days before the race. He never ran again. In all he competed 100 times over jumps, winning 24 of his starts.

The public were still able to see much of the horse at his many engagements, though, and he was routinely at the head of the Grand National parade. He missed that ap-

pointment this year, but he did make one final appearance at Aintree on 3 May, the actual date of his 30th birthday.

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"It wasn't just his five Grand Nationals, but it was the Scottish National and he was a short-head second in the Hennessy," McCain said yesterday. "He was a tremendous old competitor, but much more than that he switched on Blackpool lights and was Chieftain of Honour at the Highland Games. He was a very remarkable horse, a seriously magical horse."

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with the  INDEPENDENT



Few cars excite such love and loyalty as a Lotus. Launched in 1948 by the legendary Colin Chapman, the Lotus appeal is summed up by its two most famous marques - Esprit and Elan. Now a thoroughbred joins the Lotus stable, the Elise.

Launched to acclaim at the Frankfurt Motor Show in September, this futuristic two-seater is perhaps their most exciting car ever - and we have one to give away.

Lotus describe their new model as "small, strong, ultra-light, very fast and great fun to drive". The low weight of 675kg benefits braking, handling and steering response. The adjustable driver's seat gives firm yet comfortable support and the minimalist instrumentation displays clear, immediate information.

Visually the car is stunning, the curvaceous lines set off by unique five-spoke alloy wheels. The light weight and aerodynamic shape makes the Elise a "green" machine, cutting down on fuel consumption and thus carbon dioxide emissions.

The 1.795cc 4-cylinder fuel-injected engine delivers a top speed of around 120mph and the Elise, worth approximately £20,000, comes with catalytic converter, engine immobiliser, cloth trim and black vinyl hood.

Lotus are exhibiting the Elise at this month's Motor Show at London's Earls Court and to make it easier to view our prize car, there is a voucher on this page that gives £2 off the normal entry price of £5.

As well as receiving the keys to a Lotus Elise, our competition winner will also get one year's free insurance provided by Norwich Union Club Insurance. This service offers a 24-hour Clubline which, should you have an accident, connects you to a dedicated Club Incident Manager who will take immediate care of the problem.

To be in with a chance of winning our prize you must collect six differently numbered tokens from the 14 we are printing in the *Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday*. At least one token must come from the *Independent on Sunday*. Today we are printing Token 5 and we will print an entry form at the end of the competition.

INDEPENDENT

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- To enter our Lotus Elise Prize Draw you need to collect 6 differently numbered tokens, including one from the *Independent on Sunday*.
- The closing date for entries is 17 November 1995. Send to: Independent/Lotus Elise Prize Draw, PO Box 203, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 1TY along with a completed entry form which will be printed on 20 and 28 October.
- For previously published tokens or an entry form send an SAE to: Independent/Lotus Elise, PO Box 38, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 1TX. State the amount of tokens you require (only 4 per application). Please mark clearly on your envelope, Token Request or Entry Form. If you need both, please send separate SAE's. Requests must be received by first post 6 November 1995.
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- The Lotus Elise will be available in August 1996.
- The winner must co-operate for publicity purposes if required and accept that his/her name and photograph will be published in the paper.
- Photocopies of tokens and entry forms are not acceptable.
- The promoter reserves the right, in their absolute discretion to disqualify any entrant or competitor, nominees, or to add to, or waive any rules.
- No correspondence will be entered into.
- Proof of postage will not be accepted as proof of receipt. The promoter will not take responsibility for entries lost or damaged in the post.
- The competition is only open to residents of the UK and the Irish Republic. The prize will be as stated, with no cash alternative. The Editor's decision is final.
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 INDEPENDENT

TOKEN 5



## sport

# Illingworth might benefit from observing that mutual loyalty was a cornerstone of Ramsey's relationship with his players

On the journey to South Africa yesterday Michael Atherton had plenty of time to reflect upon a break with tradition unthinkable certainly when England's cricketers were led into the field by autocratic amateurs.

In a week that sees the centenary of W G Grace's death, it can be imagined that the good doctor and any number of his successors would have been outraged by the very idea of conceding authority in selection to a team manager, not even one in possession of a dukedom.

As this became an important condition of Atherton's reappointment as captain and he has not always been on the same wavelength as Raymond Illingworth, it will be interesting to see how the arrangement works out should the manager find himself alongside Terry Venables in the tabloid shooting gallery.

That probability aside, doubtless there was a disturbance in the minds of many diehards when Illingworth assumed the autonomy granted reluctantly to Alf Ramsey by the Football Association in order to secure his services as manager of the England team.

Where his predecessor, Walter Winterbottom, a kindly academic, had accepted the difficulties imposed by a selection committee, often conceding to ludicrous regional bias, Ramsey demanded absolute independence; his policies, his team. "I suppose I'd better inform those people," he said typically one day in

the West of Scotland, making off towards a group of powerless senior officials with belated word of the team he had picked.

Some within the FA found this intolerable and the grudges they bore against Ramsey were evident in his downfall. The feted hero of 1966 was fired six months after failing to qualify England for the 1974 World Cup finals in West Germany.

In Illingworth's own dialect, that is something for him to think on about. Atherton will have some input in selection but the teams he leads in South Africa will be Illingworth's. No matter what mistakes Atherton makes on the field ultimate responsibility will rest with the manager.

The impression Illingworth



KEN JONES

creates is one of stubborn single mindedness, a man not given to prevarication. I don't know how close this is to truth, but from now on there will be no getting away from it. If results on tour again fall short

of expectations, critics will know where to look for a scapegoat.

Throughout a closely-contested series against the West Indies last summer, it could be assumed that despite being of different generations and thus of conflicting attitudes, Illingworth and Atherton had at last established a sound working relationship.

However, this week has seen Illingworth occupied by conversations with Geoffrey Boycott in the *Sun* newspaper that have touched upon differences with Atherton over matters of selection. A personal suspicion is that the England captain may have found this more than just slightly irritating.

We are speaking about different

games, different policies and eras, but Illingworth might benefit from observing that absolute mutual loyalty was a cornerstone of Ramsey's famously successful relationship with his players; for example, early personal differences with England's captain, Bobby Moore, were never given a public airing.

It is not a habit of this column to swerve away from the central theme but an exception can be made in the case of Hugo McIlvanney, whose stature in sportswriting is recognised internationally.

Great performers of the turf, horses, jockeys and trainers have never been better described than they are in McIlvanney's brilliant collection of racing pieces (*McIlvanney*

on Horseracing, Mainstream Publishing, £14.99).

Of particular poignancy is an interview with Jonjo O'Neill who recorded one of the greatest victories ever seen at Cheltenham when he brought Dawn Run home in the 1986 Gold Cup. Just a few months later Dawn Run died following a fall in France and Jonjo was beginning a battle against cancer. "I can see every grasshopper in the grass," he recalled.

One of many experiences in McIlvanney's company concerns another disastrous day in the Cotswolds. In a desperate attempt to ease the pain we tried to strike a bet on Liverpool in the European Cup. "Game's already over," came the reply. Some experts!

## Houston Rockets lift off

### Basketball

DUNCAN HOOVER

Just two years ago the highlight of their schedule was a trip down the M1 to face Crystal Palace. Today, Sheffield Sharks line up alongside the Houston Rockets and the champions of Italy, Spain, Israel and Australia in the McDonald's Championship, the glitziest tournament any English club has played in.

According to Jim Brandon, the American coach of the Budweiser League champions, it does not stop there. "This is the biggest tournament any Spanish, Italian, Israeli or Australian club has played in as well," he said. "Outside of the NBA finals, this is the greatest club basketball tournament in the world."

Earlier this week, the NBA hit town and transformed London Arena for the three-day event, boosting capacity by 20 per cent to 10,500, with extra seating for the London Docklands venue. "I'm not sure English fans realise what this means to have the event here," Brandon said. "The sport has to utilise this weekend for all its worth so that we can look back on the McDonald's as the start of a real move forward for UK basketball."

NBA teams have won all six previous McDonald's, but this is the first time six champion clubs have competed. The Rockets are the first reigning NBA champions to take part, and the likely absence from court of the injured 7ft 4in Hakeem Olajuwon should give this year's event a slightly more competitive edge.

Olajuwon, however, disagrees. Even if he doesn't play, he does not rate the chances of Houston's opponents and says: "The rest of world basketball won't catch up with us in my lifetime."

Brandon's team, who tuned up with a 97-61 win over Hemel Royals on Tuesday, take a slight step up in class tonight for their first game against the European champions, Real Madrid.

The Sharks need no motivation after losing by just 13 points on aggregate to the Spaniards in the European Clubs' Championship this month. "It couldn't be a better start for us because my players are obsessed with setting the score against Madrid," Brandon said. "If Madrid don't play well they'll lose."

Sheffield would then have another mountain to climb in tomorrow's semi-final against the winners from tonight's game between Italy's Buckler Bologna and Israel's Maccabi Tel Aviv. In tomorrow's other semi-final, Houston play the Australian champions, Perth Wildcats.

## Tour to take Indurain near home town

### Cycling

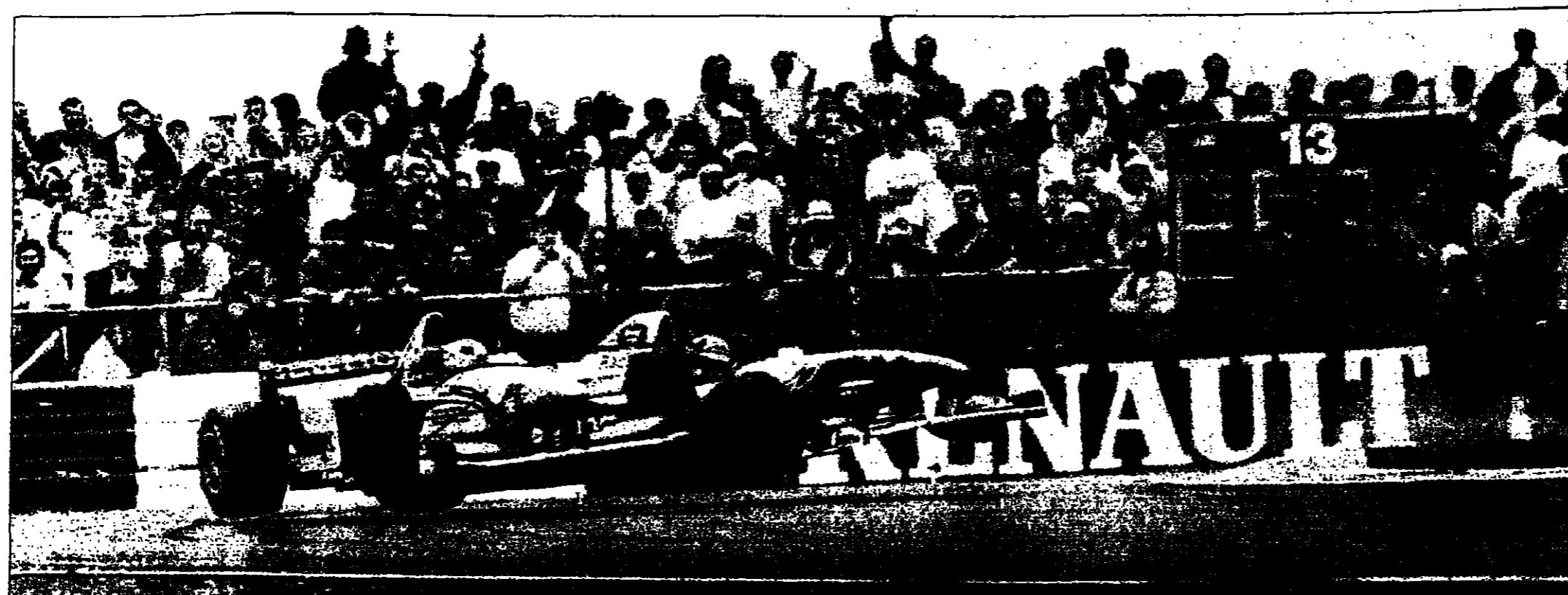
Miguel Indurain, the winner of the last five Tours de France, will be able to visit his home town during next year's race. The route for the 1996 race, announced yesterday, starts in the Netherlands, goes through Belgium and then loops clockwise around France with a small excursion to Pamplona, Spain, near Indurain's home.

The race, which starts on 29 June, covers around 2,385 miles, ending at the Champs Elysees on 21 July. There are 21 stages with a prologue and a rest day.

The annual award for the best young rider in the Tour will be named after Fabio Casartelli, the Italian rider for the Motorola team who died in a crash on a descent in the Pyrenees.

The Tour will end a week earlier than usual because of the Olympics. That will allow time for the cyclists to make their way to Atlanta, where professionals will compete for the first time.

Tour route, *Sporting Digest*, page 31



Magnificent men in their flying machines: Michael Schumacher (left) and Damon Hill collide in this season's British Grand Prix at Silverstone

Photograph: Dale Cherry

# How racing relies on basic instinct

The championship may seem all but over mathematically, but there is much that Damon Hill can retrieve from the three remaining races to enhance his prospects for next season.

Starting with Sunday's Pacific Grand Prix and on through Suzuka to Adelaide, Damon has the opportunity to dominate his team, Williams-Renault, re-establish his influence, and lay the foundations for 1996.

It is not yet over this season, of course, and in our game anything can happen. It is, for instance, possible for a driver to be deducted points for a breach of regulations. But Damon would need that kind of assistance – or snookers – to stop Michael Schumacher winning his second title.

The important thing for Damon is to impose himself on proceedings. He has made a couple of clumsy mistakes of late, which have left him out of touch with Michael and portrayed him as a not particularly great racer, and that is probably not so.

Damon has a strong view of things, but some of the aggression he has encountered recently should not have been acceptable under the overtaking regulations, and all drivers may shortly have the further clarification he seeks on this issue.

However, I feel strongly that when you are rushing into a corner at over 190mph and you are in close company, anything you do has to be instinctive. Everything happens incredibly quickly. There is no logical thought process. You can't be running through a series of regulations. It is called motor racing.

It is also going to end up being aggressive. That is an essential ingredient. It always has been, and it is what people want. You think back, for example, to Nigel Mansell's manoeuvre in beating Nelson Piquet in the 1987 British Grand Prix. It was breathtaking and had it gone wrong, the result would have been terrible.

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**Martin Brundle** (right), Britain's most experienced current Formula One driver, assesses why Michael Schumacher is poised to claim a second championship and how Damon Hill can strengthen his challenge for the title next year

Williams. There has been a lot of talk about Williams and the team effort behind Williams' driving.

It is difficult to know if anyone could have done better than Damon has, given his equipment, although when you compare Jean-Christophe Bouillon's times in testing for Williams and then racing for Sauber Ford, you have to conclude that Williams is a very special car.

Damon has, in fairness, established himself as the only consistent challenger to Schumacher over the past two seasons, and I believe he is right when he says a team has to have the upper hand next year.

What must also be said is that Schumacher's team, Benetton-Renault, have pulled some very smart moves in terms of their strategy against

first time – he has a few doubts in the back of his mind.

I think he has some concerns. Ferrari have a lot to do, they are developing a V10 engine, he has to get to know the engineers, and so on. But Michael's confidence is supreme and I don't see him having a great problem there.

You can achieve No 1 status by dominating the team and producing the performances.

Damon has not done so far alongside David Coulthard, and he has to do it next year with Jacques Villeneuve. I happen to think Damon will find it easier to do that with Villeneuve.

Michael has demonstrated he can be put into virtually any car and win a grand prix, but switching from Benetton to Ferrari will have its difficulties – after all, he is leaving behind his family.

I was a little surprised to hear him suggest he has his sights on the championship in 1997 rather than 1996, because he felt Williams would have the upper hand next year.

That is either a con, or – for the first time – he has a few doubts in the back of his mind.



MICHAEL SCHUMACHER

RENAULT

# Graf has her break cut short

## Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS  
reports from Brighton

Steffi Graf still considers her "little holiday" from tax problems in Germany to have been worthwhile, even though it turned into an away-day. The Wimbledon champion's lack of match practice since winning the United States Open six weeks ago was cruelly exposed in her opening match at the Brighton international tournament when she was overwhelmed by the power and confidence of Mari-an de Swardt, the hefty South African qualifier, 6-2, 4-6, 6-1.

It was only the second defeat of the year for Graf, the other, in Toronto in August, also having been inflicted by a South African, the diminutive Amanda Coetzer, who, by coincidence, was playing on an adjacent court when the drama unfolded yesterday.

De Swardt, No 54 in the world, is the lowest ranked player to defeat Graf since she lost to Britain's Jo Durie (No 52) at Brighton in 1985 - the last occasion Graf was beaten in the tournament.

A winner of the title six times, Graf expressed disappointment at being eliminated so early when the event is about to come to a close after 18 years. So, too, did Jana Novotna, the second seed and winner of the event for the past two years, who was unable to combat the effects of a virus and the attacking style of a Dutch opponent, Miriam Ortmans, who won, 6-4, 6-0.

Graf, who was denied the opportunity to find her rhythm after taking a break from tour-

nments to rest her ailing back, offered no excuses and gave de Swardt the highest praise: "For the first one and a half sets, it was the best that a woman has ever played against me." Did that include Monica Seles, Graf's last opponent, with whom she shares the world No 1 ranking? "For the first one and a half sets, yes."

During that magical period, the 24-year-old from Johannesburg gave an almost flawless display of fierce, accurate stroke play and attacking flair. "Whatever I hit went in," she marvelled. Until that is, she had a break point to lead 4-0 in the second set. Graf saved it with a trademark forehand, and produced another to revive her prospects by breaking de Swardt in the next game.

Having levelled the match, Graf appeared about to take control when de Swardt missed a volley to present her with a break point in the opening game of the final set. It was then that the South African conjured a stroke of boldness rarely seen from Graf's opponents, rescuing the situation with an ace of a second serve.

The match swiftly drifted away from Graf after she twice double-faulted and then steered a forehand over the baseline to offer de Swardt the chance to break in the second game. The South African converted with a low backhand volley, and swept into a 5-0 lead before Graf could respond to avoid a whitewash.

While the potency of de Swardt's performance surprised Graf, she had anticipated a difficult encounter, remembering her only previous match against the South African at Wimble-

ton in 1992, the German winning 7-5 in the third set.

Graf emphasised that she was as healthy as possible for someone with a chronic back injury, and said her form had not been affected by the troubles back home, where her father is in prison, accused of evading tax

on her earnings. "The only problem was on the court today," she said.

De Swardt, in her moment of triumph, expressed sympathy for Graf. "I feel really bad for her," she said. "I don't know if I could play tennis if that was going on with me. I respect her

for trying to play and feel very sorry for what she's going through."

Graf intends to go directly to the United States to prepare for a tournament in Philadelphia on 6 November, ahead of the WTA Tour Championships in New York on 13 November.

Photograph: Peter Jay

Low blow: Steffi Graf hits a backhand during her defeat by Mariana de Swardt yesterday

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Although in need of as much match play as possible, she will respond joining Seles in the Oakland event of 30 October. "That would mean playing two tournaments in a row, and I don't do that any more," Graf said. It was the saddest comment of the day.

Photograph: Peter Jay

Low blow: Steffi Graf hits a backhand during her defeat by Mariana de Swardt yesterday

on their own time and then break at you round the box with a change of pace. It won't be an easy game, but if we're at our best it's one we can win."

Which pretty well sums up Celtic's position as they travel to meet Paris St Germain. Their problems revolve around the full-back Tosh McKinlay and the midfielder Simon Donnelly, who are doubtful with thigh and calf injuries respectively. Should McKinlay not play, Jamie McQuillan will step in.

The Celtic captain Paul McStay and the midfielder Phil O'Donnell have also entered the picture.

"Both players have now

come into my thinking," their manager, Tommy Burns, said last night at the team's hotel in Versailles. McStay has been nursing a groin strain, while O'Donnell has been struggling with a calf injury.

Burns knows that McStay's influence could be a vital factor in the intimidating atmosphere of Parc des Princes. Paris SG could prove a formidable barrier, even though they will be without two key players. The defender and captain Alain Roche and the Panamanian striker Julio Cesar Dely Valdes are both injured, which leaves the midfielder Vincent Guerin to pose the biggest threat.

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# England's build-up to Test in chaos

## Rugby Union

STEVE BALE

England's preparations for the Test against the World Cup holders, South Africa, at Twickenham on 18 November are in a state of chaos after squad training sessions which were as notable for parades of walking wounded as for the work that was done.

The regular get-togethers at Marlow seemed a good idea at the time they were conceived last season in the long build-up to the World Cup. But now, though there is no evidence of malingering, they appear to be following the pattern of the old trial matches: good ones to miss.

This season's second session took place on Tuesday. "It was bad last time and it's worse this

time," Jack Rowell, the England manager, said. "I've said to the players that if, the week before we play South Africa, we are in this state, we'll have serious problems.

"We are not being able to prepare properly. They have great loyalty to their clubs and they play with niggly injuries which become chronic."

This week at Marlow the top sheet of Rowell's instruc-

tional flip-chart listed nine injured squad members in addition to Tony Underwood - Bracken, Catt, Johnson, Leonard, Mensah, Ojomoh, Pears, Shaw and West - and when Ian Hunter had not arrived by the start of training Rowell indicated he was now considering playing a centre, Damian Hopley, on the wing against the Springboks.

In other circumstances the

manager would have asked, or possibly demanded, that his players be excused the pre-Springbok round of Courage Championship fixtures on 11 November but instead he is reluctantly allowing them to play because the South African game was not on the original schedule.

This makes it no less frustrating when Rowell knows the

Springboks will have had a

month since the end of their domestic season in which to rest and get ready. "You can imagine how supercharged South Africa are going to be," he said. "Last season we asked players to rest before internationals and it paid off. This time I said we wouldn't because this game came out of the blue, but in reality I'd love to."

Rowell temporarily added Paul Grayson, Neil McCarthy,

Sean Fitzpatrick, the All Blacks captain, will miss the first game of the tour of Italy and France - against Italy B next Wednesday - after being suspended for eight days for throwing a punch in last Saturday's New Zealand Championship final between Auckland and Otago. Stuart Forster has replaced the injured scrum-half, Junior Fou'u, in the tour party.



Cleveland's third baseman, Alvaro Espinoza (right) slides in to score the Indians' first run in their 4-0 victory over the Seattle Mariners which took them through to baseball's World Series, where they will meet the Atlanta Braves. Rupert Cornwell, page 30

Photograph: Reuter

**THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD**

No. 2804. Thursday 19 October By Spurio Wednesday's solution

1	2	3	4	5
6	7			
8		9		
10			11	12
13			14	15
16			17	18
19			20	
21			22	23
24			25	26
27				

**ACROSS**

- Proof, but not in relation to spirit? (10)
- Fellow is entertaining referee with story involving brilliant wingers (9)
- Time to copy video, perhaps? (4)
- Tool for those working at a trade? (6)
- Hence a certain sort of mist can produce a plant disease (8)
- Have one's ups and downs in the first set? (6)
- State of readiness indicated by dealer about to import article from Bordeaux (3,5)
- Menacing explosive device netted by Merchant Navy - it's outside (8)
- Card-playing group in train (6)
- Painful disorder restricting a Dutch sailor, no stay-at-home by nature (8)
- Girl won't take part in disputes about arrangements (3,3)
- Contend women should give an opinion (4)
- Agribusiness with branch taking Friday off, initially (5,4)
- Extend area covered by new gas reading scheme (10)
- Like the majority of the Government? (5,4)
- Holiday in the fall (4)
- Withdrawn and kept on one side? (8)
- Jazz number you can get up in a fortnight (5)
- Old soldier, man entrusted with operation, literally? (7)
- Bad golf shots can be disconcerting (3,7)
- Vainly aspire to sing? (6)
- Game cooked in omelettes with a hint of mushroom (10)
- Original character in radio soap, endlessly kind? (9)
- Relieve peacekeeping force that's burned out (8)
- Descriptive of a crowd amounting to total number in China, we hear? (7)
- Eyeight's funny, beginning to fail? (6)
- Hat left out in shady part of garden (5)
- Sound system we'll get in March if interest's reduced (2,2)

**DOWN**

- Badly off, in a bad way (5)
- Relieve peacekeeping force that's burned out (8)
- Withdrawn and kept on one side? (8)
- Jazz number you can get up in a fortnight (5)
- Old soldier, man entrusted with operation, literally? (7)
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- Sound system we'll get in March if interest's reduced (2,2)

## Atherton feeling positive

### Cricket

Mike Atherton led England's team off to South Africa last night, delighted with the way his management relationship with Ray Illingworth is going - and not a bit perturbed by Ily's insistence on being totally in charge.

England's battle-hardened captain, his batteries recharged after a month's rest, spoke of how much he was looking forward to the historic 14-week tour, England's first to South Africa for 30 years.

And, before boarding the flight to Johannesburg from Heathrow, Atherton said: "Raymond has been given a particular job by the Test and County Cricket Board and he wants that to last the year, but I don't think he's going to ignore whatever I have to say."

"I've had a lot of input dur-

ing the summer and I think we have both learnt things. In fact, as far as selection of the team is concerned, I don't think there will be any real change compared to previous tours, even though Ray will make any final decisions."

"Our relationship has progressed to a level where we get on extremely well - but the most important thing is how it works within the England team. I felt during the summer that the players were very happy with the way things were going and it makes a lot of sense for Ray to be with the team this winter as manager for 100 per cent of the time."

"There will be no lack of communication, nor will there be anything misconstrued - as possibly happened last winter. I like to have someone around to talk tactics, both during and between matches - it will be nice to have Ray around for the whole tour."

Atherton said he felt the five-Test series will be very sum-

ilar in style to this summer's contest with the West Indies. He said: "It will be dominated by pace, but we have the batsman who can handle that. We have a lot of really good players of quick bowling as we showed against the West Indies, so we will have no fears on that score."

"My real hope is that we get more luck than in previous years with injuries, and that especially our three quickest bowlers - Devon Malcolm, Dominic Cork and Darren Gough - stay fit."

"I hope Devon from when he took nine wickets against them at The Oval - and it's up to Devon to reproduce that form."

"All our players are confident that we can beat South Africa, but we must keep playing the sort of cricket that we produced this summer. In the past our away form has been poor. We've got to change that."

Kumble milestone, page 31

## O'Sullivan's misery continues

### Snooker

Ronnie O'Sullivan suffered a first-round defeat for the second world-ranking event in succession at the Skoda Grand Prix in Sunderland yesterday.

The former UK champion, who also failed to clear the opening hurdle in the recent Thailand Classic, crashed out 5-2 to Portadown's Michael Duffy in the biggest upset of the season so far.

"It's a big disappointment because I have been working really hard on my game and practising more than I have in a very long time," said the world No 3 from Essex, whose well-documented family problems appear to be having an adverse effect on him.

O'Sullivan, taking on some

risky pots which Duffy described as "mad", fell 2-1 behind and also trailed 36-0 in the fourth frame before briefly coming to life. The 19-year-old constructed a superb 102 clearance to draw level at 2-2 and it looked like he had weathered the storm.

But Duffy, whose only other significant achievement in three years as a professional was to record a victory over Alex Higgins, regained the lead by winning the scrappy fifth frame on the blue. After that, Duffy pulled away with breaks of 35 and 43.

"Ronnie played well in patches, but he didn't seem to be concentrating 100 per cent, and you could tell he wasn't totally with it," Duffy said.

Duffy goes forward to meet fellow Ulsterman Joe Swail, who maintained his solid start

to the season by beating Scunthorpe's Jeff Cudby 5-3.

For the second day in a row, a player from Grimsby left the table visibly upset with his opponent. On Tuesday, Mike Hallett was annoyed about a free-ball decision during the deciding frame of his 5-4 defeat by Neal Foulds. Yesterday, it was Dean Reynolds who expressed disgust at the slow play of Mark Flowerdew, who finally beat him 5-3 after a 4hr 21min marathon.

"It was ridiculous," Reynolds said. "Referees should do something about the speed of play and intervene. Throughout my career I have never come across a slower player than him. It was a joke and it didn't do the game any favours."

Results, Sporting Digest, page 31

## Pantani breaks leg in collision

### Cycling

Italy's Marco Pantani, the bronze medallist at the recent World Championships, was taken to hospital with a broken leg yesterday after colliding with a vehicle during the Milan-Turin race.

Pantani, affectionately dubbed "Little Elephant" by Italian fans because of his bald head and large ears, was in a pack chasing the leaders on a fast downhill stretch when the accident happened.

Observers said that as the riders came out of a bend they hit a four-wheel drive vehicle emerging from a side road. The Italian riders Davide Dall'Orto and Francesco Secchiaroli suffered minor injuries in the accident.

Pantani, who missed the Giro d'Italia last year after hitting a car in a training accident in May, was a stage winner in the mountains during the last Tour de

France. Doctors said the rider would undergo surgery for an exposed break of the tibia and fibula of his left leg. He also suffered minor injuries to his chin and collar-bone.

The 208-km race was won by Italy's Stefano Zanini in 4hr 54min 24sec ahead of Denmark's Rolf Sorensen and Italy's Francesco Casagrande.

Jeannie Longo, of France, aborted her attempt to regain the world one-hour track record after less than 16 minutes in Bogota because the conditions were too windy.

She was attempting to beat the 47.411km record set by Britain's Yvonne McGregor in Manchester in June this year, but after covering nearly 13km in 15min 55sec at the Luis Carlos Galan Sarmiento Velodrome, Longo pulled up. She held the one-hour record from October 1989 until April this year with 46.352km, which she set in Mexico City.

Tour de France, page 30

## Domi suspended for unprovoked attack

### Ice hockey

"Mr Domi's actions were deliberate, premeditated and clearly administered with the intent to injure his opponent," said Brian Burke, the NHL director of hockey operations.

"The fact that Mr Samuelson was unable to defend himself as he was looking away from his opponent also was a factor in my decision. While Mr Samuelson verbally challenged Mr Domi prior to the punch, verbal taunting by an opponent does not justify this type of conduct."

Domi is eligible to return on 3 November for the Leafs' game against Vancouver. Samuelson, who was diagnosed as suffering from concussion, did not play in the Rangers' 7-5 defeat by Hartford on Monday night.

Results, Sporting Digest, page 31

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